RELIGION,

A

POEM:

From the FRENCH of the Younger

L. RACINE.

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PREFACE.

REASON, who demonſtrates to me with ſo much evidence the exiſtence of a God, anſwers me ſo obſcurely when I interrogate her about the nature of my ſoul, and keeps ſo profound a ſilence when I aſk her the cauſe of the contrarieties in me, that herſelf makes me perceive the neceſſity of a revelation, and compels me to deſire it. I ſeek among the various religions, that which muſt be founded upon revelation. By the firſt of all books, which I get from the firſt of all people, and by the ſeries of the hiſtory of the world, I find in the Chriſtian Religion all the characters of certainty that I wiſh. Big with admiration, I would immediately ſubmit to it, were I not ſtopped by the obſcurity of its myſteries, and the ſeverity of its morals. I examine the weakneſs of my underſtanding, and perceive that my reaſon muſt not be my onely light. I examine my heart, and perceive that the Chriſtian morality is ſuited to its wants. I embrace with joy a Religion as lovely as reſpectable.

Such is the plan of this work, which I have conducted upon this ſhort thought of M. Paſcal: "To thoſe who are averſe to Religion, we muſt "begin with ſhowing that it is not contrary to "Reaſon, then that it is venerable; next, render

" it amiable, make it wiſhed to be true, ſhow that " it is true, and laſt of all that it is amiable."

This thought is the abridgement of the whole poem, in which I have often made uſe of other thoughts of the ſame author, as well as of the ſublime reflections of the biſhop of Meaux upon Univerſal Hiſtory. Following theſe two maſters, I have choſen two of the great men who have wrote upon Religion in a manner the moſt convincing, the nobleſt and the moſt worthy of her.

Tho' each canto contain a diſtinct ſubject, and make, ſo to ſay, a particular poem; they muſt all however correſpond to the general deſign, and be ſo ſucceſſively connected, that the firſt bring on the ſecond, the ſecond the third, and ſo forth.

CANTO I.

The fundamental of all other truths is, the exiſtence of a God. This makes the ſubject of the firſt canto. I draw the proof of it from the wonders of nature, and from the harmony of all its parts, which concurring to one end, diſplay the unity of the framer's deſign. I ſhall in the ſequel ſhow, that this ſame unity of deſign reigns alſo in the eſtabliſhment of Religion; becauſe theſe two great works have one and the ſame author. The idea we have of a God furniſhes the ſecond proof. This idea is common to all men, who have not run after falſe Gods, but becauſe they were ſeeking the true. So idolatry affords me a new evidence. The laſt is taken from our inward conſciouſneſs, and

and from the natural law which previouſly to all other laws has ever compelled men to condemn injuſtice and to admire virtue.

CANTO II.

The neceſſity of knowing one's ſelf, in order to the knowlege of God, conducts to the ſecond canto. There I imitate the language of a man who after loſing his firſt years in frivolous ſtudies, would perform the moſt important, which is that of one's ſelf. I open my eyes upon myſelf, and am aſtoniſhed at the contrarieties I find in me. Who am I? My happineſs cannot be here below, ſince here I am to make ſo ſhort a ſtay. When I depart, whither ſhall I go? Is my ſoul immortal? That it is my reaſon gives me aſſurances which I feiſe with joy; yet as I fear leſt my intereſt to believe ſo comfortable a truth ſhould have made me too eaſily admit its proofs, I will inform myſelf of what reaſon has told the moſt famous philoſophers of antiquity. I ſee them all divided among themſelves, by ſyſtems which explain nothing. Plato pleaſes me better than the reſt; but when I aſk him the cauſe of our woes, he is ſilent. Theſe philoſophers have known our miſery, but all been ignorant of the cauſe. Reaſon's ſilence alarms me; I am ready to deſpair, when I learn that God has ſpoken to men. What is that people with whom he has depoſited his word? Reaſon which makes

me

me feel the neceſſity of a revelation, animates me to procede in queſt of it.

CANTO III.

This enquiry is the matter of the third canto. Two religions divide almoſt all the earth, the Chriſtian and the Mahometan. Mahomet confeſſing that he came not till after Jeſus Chriſt, by a confeſſion ſo favorable to the Chriſtians, remits me to them; the Chriſtians, to let me know the antiquity of their religion, refer me to the Jews, and the Jews to their ſacred oracles. The miſerable ſtate of this people, and their obſtinacy in expecting the Meſſiah, are living atteſtations to the book they preſerve with ſo much care. This book expounds to me the riddle which reaſon could not penetrate. This book teaches me then the hiſtory of the world, and that of God's favorite people. While all others are loſt in idolatry, the pure idea of one onely Being remains with a people more ignorant than the reſt: but a viſible protection ſaves that peculiar people from periſhing. God is conſtantly recalling them to himſelf, either by miracles, or by prophets: I pauſe at the prophets. Struck with their predictions, as well as with the types no leſs clear than the prophecies; I acknowlege one God ever intent upon his great work, ſometimes announcing it by men whom he inſpires, and ſometimes diſplaying it afar in ſo reſembling images.

CANTO IV.

The coming of a Deliverer ſo often foretold and figured, is the ſubject of the fourth canto. The enchainment of the revolutions of empires, with the eſtabliſhment of the Chriſtian Religion, evinces the divinity of it. Its hiſtory is that of the world, becauſe God, by the unity of his deſign, refers all events to his great work. The union of almoſt all empires to the Roman, ſo favorable to the progreſs of the goſpel, leads to the general peace of the earth under Auguſtus. This peace prepares the heathens for the renewal of ages foretold by their oracles, and the Jews for the coming of the Meſſiah predicted by their prophets. In this general expectation, Jeſus Chriſt appears, and proves his miſſion by his miracles and his doctrine. The chaſtiſement of the Jews evinces their crime; the rapid progreſs of religion, the martyrs and their miracles, make paganiſm fall to the ground; and it is entirely aboliſhed by the barbarians whom God calls from the utmoſt corners of the north to deſtroy Rome, drunk with Chriſtian blood, and to form a new Rome, which tho' in another way, ſtill maintains ſome ſhadow of the greatneſs of the old. But however amiable it be by its hiſtory, it ſeems by its myſteries and its morals to revolt at once the head and the heart: it remains then to ſpeak to both.

CANTO V.

I endeavor in the fifth canto to humble that haughty ſpirit. The myſteries, it is true, appear to oppoſe Reaſon; but Reaſon muſt not be our onely light: by her alone we are mere ignorance. How could we read in the great book of the ſecrets of heaven, ſince we read almoſt nothing in the book of Nature which ſeems to ly open at our feet? and what have we learned ſince we have ſtudied it? ſome facts; no cauſes. Nature herſelf admits us not into her ſanctuary. A ſhort hiſtory of our progreſs in natural philoſophy, is the proof. Chance, which has opened to us ſome diſcoveries, has gradually cured us of our former errors. Reaſon has ſeemed to eſtabliſh her reign ſince Deſcartes and Newton: but both, ſhowing us the greatneſs of the human mind, have alſo evidenced its weakneſs; ſeeing they have loſt themſelves like the reſt, when they pretended to paſs the bounds which God has ſet to our curioſity. Can man ſo much as know the cauſe of gravity? Does he know how digeſtion is performed? Is he acquainted with the cauſe of the fever, or the virtues of the quinquina? All is vailed to him in Nature; but he gives her an adſcititious vail, if he extinguiſh the torch of Religion. Can he explain to me why he is but ignorance? why the earth is full of diſorder and imperfection? Either God would not render his work perfect, or he could not. On both ſides the deiſt finds a gulf, while I, for whom Faith lifts a corner

of the vail, ſee enough to be no longer in darkneſs. Religion by teaching me the cauſes of all diſorders and of our woes, teaches me to improve thoſe woes, and ſhows me, that our ignorance, the puniſhment of ſin, ought to engage us not to loſe our little ſpan in enquiries which cannot profit. A religion which anſwers me more clearly than philoſophy, and which coheres with ſo wonderful order, cannot be a human invention. I have no longer any dout, and my Reaſon finds not its light contrary to hers: but the two torches combine, and make one flame to me.

CANTO VI.

After combating the atheiſts in the firſt canto, and the deiſts in the four following; I attack in the laſt thoſe who are incredulous onely thro' indolence. Their oppoſition to believe procedes from nothing but their oppoſition to practiſe: they would make to Religion the ſacrifice of their lights, did ſhe not exact alſo the ſacrifice of the paſſions. When the heart is not touched, the head which is always its dupe, ſeeks pretexts to excuſe its revolt. It is therefore the heart I attack, by ſhewing the conformity of Reaſon's morals with the morals of Religion. The former has been known to the poets even the moſt voluptuous, but has not been practiſed by the philoſophers, even the moſt ſevere; whereas Religion's morality has changed the univerſe, becauſe it is founded upon love, which renders all precepts eaſy. This love which kindled the fervor of the

firſt ages, is growing always weaker, as has been foretold; when it ſhall be ready to expire, God ſhall come to judge mankind, and on the world's laſt day ſhall be conſummated the great work of Religion, which began on the firſt day of it.

A ſubject ſo vaſt, ſo intereſting and ſo copious, has no need of other ornaments for its ſupport, than thoſe it furniſhes from its own fund. I ſhould loſe the reſpect I ow my theme, did I dare to deviate into fiction. In any other didactic poem, it might find now and then a place to animate the coldneſs of precept and argument: but it can find none in this. Religion is ſo grave, that the diſcreteſt fiction puts on to it an air of fable, which cannot combine with truth.

It is this monſtrous medley that is condemned with reaſon in the poem of Sannaſarius: one is provoked to hear ſacred marvels from the mouth of Proteus, to find a number of Nereids ſurrounding Jeſus Chriſt when he walks upon the waters; and with contempt one ſees Neptune do him homage, by ſtriking his trident before him. Yet this poem which coſt its author twenty years' toil, gained him honorable briefs from two Pontifs; in one of which Leo X. thanks providence 'which hath permitted the church to find ſo great a champion as Sannaſarius, at a time when ſhe was attacked by ſo many enemies.' *Divinâ factum providentiâ ut divina ſponſa tot impiis oppugnatoribus laceratoribuſque laceſſita, talem tantumque nacta ſit propugnatorem.* Not that ſo enlightened a judge could approve the abuſe

abuſe which the poet had made of the ornaments of fable, or think that Jordan ſpeaking to his nymphs of Jeſus Chriſt, could convert heretics and infidels; but it was the praiſe which has ever been beſtowed upon a poet who conſecrates his labors to uſeful ſubjects, and above all to the glory of Religion.

I own that by renouncing the bright beauties of fiction, one muſt perhaps renounce alſo the title of poet, and reſt ſatisfied with that of verſifier; but as the benefit of mankind ought to be the principal object of a diſcrete writer, I ſhould be ſufficiently rewarded for my pains, did my verſification contribute to imprint more eaſily upon the mind the truths which concern all men. Sometimes even the numbers are cramped by the matter, which allows not full ſcope to one's imagination, and in which one muſt even ſacrifice ornament, upon occaſion, to the juſtneſs of ratiocination.

It was the love alone of public utility, and not the ambition of paſſing for a poet, that induced the famous Grotius to put firſt into Dutch verſe, tho' in a ſimple ſtile adapted to the reach of the vulgar, his excellent treatiſe upon the truth of the Chriſtian Religion, which he gave afterwards in Latin proſe, and has been tranſlated into ſo many languages. He wanted to furniſh his countrymen, whom commerce carries among ſo many nations, and conſequently among ſo many opinions, with a work which ſhould ſerve to confirm them in the faith, while it recreated them during the moments of relaxation, to be found in a long voyage. And when he ventured

tured to put ſuch a ſubject into verſe, he expected the indulgence due to authors, who according to the words of an ancient, undauntedly ſurmounting every difficulty in their way, have preferred the deſire of being uſeful to the delight of pleaſing. * *Qui difficultatibus victis, utilitatem juvandi prætulerunt gratiæ placendi.*

It is alſo by the example of that illuſtrious perſon, that I have added notes; of which the moſt are abſolutely neceſſary, either to elucidate the reaſoning, or to authoriſe the facts. The facts I eſtabliſh almoſt always upon the teſtimony of heathen writers, becauſe the confeſſions of our enemies are corroborations for us. If I ſometimes cite the profane poets and philoſophers, it is to ſhow, that upon truths ſo important, the greateſt geniuſes of antiquity have thought as we, becauſe Reaſon has ſpoke the ſame language to all who have heard her attentively; that far from being contrary to Religion, as they fancy who have not duly conſulted her; it is ſhe on the contrary, who makes us find the neceſſity of it, and who conducts us to it as it were by the hand.

* Plin. Nat.

RELIGION.

CANTO I.

REASON I ſing to Faith conducting Man.
Reaſon, who with her torch enlights my plan,
Tow'rds my true goal bids all my pow'rs employ;
Firſt makes it known, then makes it all my joy.

Indocil mortals, your contempt ſuſpend:
That very Reaſon whom you boaſt your friend,
To hail the yoke you ſcorn invites your choice,
And if you prize her, dain to hear her voice.

And ye who Faith's exalted value know,
For your advantage too theſe verſes flow.
The man whom birth and titles can delight,
Reads them by day, and ruminates by night:
The Chriſtian thus as ardent recollects
The titles of the greatneſs he reſpects;
And for new triumph muſt new toil beſtow:
No brightneſs ſhines unclouded here below.

The pillar in this dreary wild our guide,
Turns now the lighter, now the darker ſide.
O may my Song with bleſt ſucceſs be crown'd ;
The faithful comfort, and their foes confound !

And firſt, my God, of whom I hold my lay,
To whom but Thee ſhould I its tribute pay ?
To my great theme exalt my faint eſſays :
Inſpire thy poet while he ſings thy praiſe,
Teach him to paint thy wiſe, thy righteous laws ;
Enlight the advocate that pleads thy cauſe.

To thee, my King, the ſecond homage be :
My labors' object ſpeaks them worthy thee.
With proud Impiety when war I wage,
And in Religion's juſt defence engage,
How ſhould I dare to trace the trackleſs way,
Were not thy hand my conſtant guide and ſtay ?
Thy name alone, great Faith's Defender, chears
My trembling ſteps, and diſſipates my fears.
Thy name, more pow'rful than my beſt eſſay,
Conſounds the foes of Him whom Kings obey.

And thou, dear Prince, whoſe praiſes ne'er can cloy,
Thou ſecond proſpect of the kingdom's joy ;
O royal youth, in whom good Heav'n combin'd
The gifts and graces of the heart and mind,

Indulge my arduous taſk with one regard,
My toil to animate and to reward.
Thy faith I ſing: I for that faith contend,
Thy greateſt Fathers gloried to defend.

To eyes of fleſh tho' God remain conceal'd,
To eyes of faith how glorioufly reveal'd!
What ſhining witneſſes croud all around!
Anſwer Earth, Sea; or ſpeak ye Heavens profound.
What arm, unnumber'd Orbs, can you ſuſpend?
What hand, reſplendent Night, thy veils extend?
What might, what majeſty the Heavens declare!
How full confeſs'd the great Creator there! (fill,
O Heavens, whom thouſand worlds and wonders
Ye coſt your Author onely once to will.
He ſprinkles light in the vaſt dome of ſky,
As in our fields he makes the duſt to fly.
O thou by morn announc'd, refulgent flame,
Still brightly new, yet beaming ſtill the ſame;
What brings thee from the boſom of the main,
To chear us with thy genial rays again?
Each day I look for thee, thou com'ſt each day;
Is't I that call thee? Doſt my voice obey?

Thou dreadful Sea, who wouldſt the land devour,
Tell me what hand confines thee, or what pow'r?
Vain are th' efforts thou mak'ſt to paſs thy bounds:
Thy idle rage expires upon thy mounds.

Wreak on the greedy wretch, thy vengeance wreak,
Who truſts to thee a wat'ry death to ſeek.
Even in thy jaws are vows to thee addreſs'd?
Theſe mount to Heaven the aid of the diſtreſs'd.
Now Nature ſpeaks, when wit is at end;
To Heaven both hands and eyes aſpiring tend:
A throbbing heart pays homage, and what not,
To the great God vain ſafety had forgot.

All nature ſpeaks the God. Earth cries aloud,
Of my rich ornaments can I be proud?
Or is it I that have myſelf array'd?
No, no; 'tis He, who my foundations laid.
If to thy wants I miniſter, 'tis He,
The kind Creator, that commanded me.
The gifts he gives me, are on thee beſtow'd:
The flow'rs that deck me, has his bounty ſtrow'd.
He opes his hand, whence iſſue flow'rs and food,
He opes his hand, and nature teems with good.
To ſooth the hope, and to reward the toil,
Of panting hinds in Egypt's torrid ſoil,
He bids the reg'lar Nile its banks diſdain,
And waſt my treaſures o'er my fatten'd plain.
The ſmalleſt things the great Creator ſhow:
Contemplate but the tree I give to grow.
Scarce does my ſap the fibrous roots pervade,
When from the trunk 'tis to the branch convey'd:

The leaf demands it, and the parent bough
Of good diffuſive, does the leaf endow.
Nor with its fruit enchanted let thy eyes
The plants of leſs inviting ſhow deſpiſe;
Th' obſcure and timid, humble, feeble race,
Knew'ſt thou their ſalutary pow'rs to trace,
Sweet length of days they might to thee convey;
Nor mourn tho' theirs ſo ſwiftly paſs away.
Each ſpringing plant does in itſelf contain
Of childrens children an immortal train;
And, phenix-like, in my prolific womb
Leaves a new pledge ariſing from its tomb.

Thus Earth. When charm'd to hear it, I behold
By ties connected which I can't unfold,
So various beings ſo directly tend,
With one conſent to one ſame common end;
To gen'ral order ſee them all conſpire,
Th'aſſembling Hand I thro' the whole admire:
The unity with no leſs wonder ſcan,
Than wiſdom and ſimplicity of plan.

But thou, whom all theſe marvels ne'er amaze,
Who can'ſt unmov'd on ſo much beauty gaze;
O thou who madly mak'ſt of chance a God,
Come and diſcloſe that imminent abode,
Which in one order, with ſuch wond'rous ſkill,
The vernal ſwallow maſons with her bill.

Say,

Say, the bold edifice to frame and fix,
How find materials, how the mortar mix?
Why do the prudent birds betimes provide
For th' unſeen embryo's, their future pride?
What well-pois'd cradles do the trees ſuſpend?
On ſofteſt cotton, ſay what beds extend?
Forth flies the father, with the huſband's flame,
And brings proviſions to his tender dame:
While, conſcious of his aid, his cooing dove
Broods o'er the pledges of their happy love;
Or hoſtile rage uniting to repel,
With mighty fire their feeble bodies ſwell.
So dearly lov'd, their fondlings ſhall one day
To other fondlings this dear love repay.
When the new Zephyrs breathing new deſires,
Shall light for them the hymeneal fires,
By tender ties united ſhall they pair,
And with new warblers fill the echoing air;
Unnumber'd race, where ſoon ſo many young
Shall know no more the ſires from whom they ſprung.
Some who foreboding winter's rage betimes
Reſolve to fly to leſs inclement climes,
Not for themſelves, but for their tribe they watch,
Nor e'er the loit'rers ſhall the rigors catch.
In a wiſe council for the purpoſe met,
For gen'ral flight th' important day is ſet.

It comes: they fly; the youngeſt of the train
Throws wiſhful eyes to native ſeats again,
And aſks how ſoon the bleſt returning ſpring
Shall make the exiles reſtoration ſing.

But let the ſcene of our attention change:
Deſcend to earth, where in the mire to range,
The inſect calls, and with a conſcious ſmile
Demands the reaſon why we deem it vile.
What countleſs beauties are from view retir'd!
More hid the Author, more to be admir'd.
The prudent people in yon ripen'd field
Collect an ample ſtore the harveſts yield,
Their booty trailing to their well-known hive,
Th' unwearied little laborers arrive;
Where in their public ſubterranean cells
Lo! heaps on heaps the golden plenty ſwells;
With which the common Sire us all ſuſtains,
And pays alike the man's and emmit's pains.
Poor ſpurn'd recluſe, who dragg'ſt thy pris'n along,
Crawl ſlowly ſleek, and animate my ſong.
Our cruel hate repentant now admires
The ſprings that move thy teleſcopial ſpires;
And owns its blindneſs, when thine eyes appear,
Which by degrees their flexile ſtandards rear.
Yon gaudy flatt'rer ſee ſo briſk and gay,
To various flow'rs his fickle homage pay,

And raviſh delicate from each a juice,
Ne'er meant by nature for the coxcomb's uſe.
Tho' now he eyes his brethren with diſdain,
Still meanly groveling on the humble plain;
There late himſelf as low a reptile crept,
'Till, as to hide his hideous form, he ſlept.
But now the times are chang'd; from death awake,
Behold him glorious now the grave forſake,
His groſſer ſpoils ſhake off in realms of night,
And to the ſkies exalt his lofty flight.
O worm, to whom I ow my nobleſt ſpoils,
The charming fruits of thy too ſhort-liv'd toils;
Is't but for me thou haſt thy life begun?
Thy taſk perform'd, behold, thy race is run!
Thy curious art thou leav'ſt to num'rous heirs,
Who ne'er ſhall ſee their ſire, but in his cares.
My pity, and thy wonders claim my ſong,
But that the bees to Maro's muſe belong.

The Lord whom all theſe precious gifts endow,
Man—rears alone to Heaven a noble brow:
The ſoul's vaſt ſtage, illumin'd now with joy,
Now clouded with the glooms of black annoy.
There tender Friendſhip lights her living flames,
Whoſe pleaſing ſemblance, with perfidious aims,
See two-fac'd Flattery in vain purſue,
And baleful Envy with the livid hue.

There

There bluſhes timid Modeſty, and there
Sit oppoſite Contempt, and Candor fair:
There Mildneſs, that the fierceſt wrath can quell,
There Fear, and Paleneſs her attendant, dwell;
That friend, who ſole midſt perils undiſmay'd,
Out-runs the voice, and calls immediate aid.

What croud of objects does the eye unite!
What ſcatter'd rays concenter in the ſight!
The flexile picture paints all objects plain,
And ſtrikes a nerve that bears it to the brain:
Heaven! what frail texture! what fine fibres meet!
Yet here my memory erects her ſeat!
Repoſits in this precious magazine,
Whate'er my ears have heard, my eyes have ſeen;
Remits at will, reſumes what went before,
Here keeps my treaſures, faithful to reſtore.
Thoſe ſubtile Spirits, there as at a goal,
Await the ſignal of their queen my ſoul.
'Tis given; they fly; and ſwift thro' all my frame
Thoſe docil miniſters diffuſe their flame.
Scarce have I ſpoke, when lo! they all ſtand by:
Ye unſeen ſubjects, which way did ye fly?
Who bids my blood with wholeſome ardor flow,
Which gives my frame with proper warmth to glow?
Its motions equally my heart impel,
It forms its liquor in that central cell:

It comes and warms me with its rapid courſe,
Retraces then more cool and calm its ſource;
And ſtill exhauſting it is ſtill ſupply'd:
The ports of its canals ſtand ever wide,
Affording to its flow a free acceſs;
But with oppos'd barriers deny regreſs.
Are theſe wiſe laws ſupported by my choice?
Or to their ſanction did I give my voice?
I hardly know them. By attentive care
I learn the order and the wiſdom there.
This order found, the Author let us own:
Without a law-giver were laws e'er known?

I hear the libertine with murmur rude:
Where are thoſe objects of my gratitude?
Is it a ſmiling hill, a teeming vale?
Then haſte we to admire the ſpecious tale!
See Boreas burſting with his dreadful train,
In hail and ſnow, in lightning and in rain:
Lo! man his goods, her graces Earth has loſt,
Or drown'd, or burn'd, or buried in the froſt.
But mark yon farther objects, can they pleaſe?
Deep caves, volcano's, or as uſeleſs ſeas,
Abyſſes endleſs, mountains bleak appear;
See briars, rocks and ſands, and deſarts drear!
Here with her poiſons Earth infects the air;
There roar the lion, tyger, or the bear:

Here crawls the ſerpent, and there croaks the toad;
Behold the maſter-piece of your great God!

Blaſpheming mortal, think'ſt at thy ſurmiſe,
When thy weak reaſon dares t' appoint th' aſſize,
The Judge of all muſt dain to anſwer thee?
Hear but a word, and thy groſs blindneſs ſee.
Thou ſeeſt not half, yet judgeſt of the whole,
The vail between forbids thy bold controul.
The ills, which ills thou call'ſt, not underſtood,
I ſee a hand converting to thy good.
Our art from poiſon's ſelf can borrow aid: (ſaid.
But why thoſe rocks, thoſe winds, thoſe ſtorms? you
Their ſecret benefits take here diſclos'd,
Nor truſt thoſe eyes that have ſo oft impos'd.

The ſea from which the ſun with ceaſeleſs laws
The giddy vapors ſubtiliſing draws;
Seeking its waves beholds with ſad ſurpriſe
Spread o'er its face another ſea ariſe.
This precious maſs, this lightly floating tide,
By winds officious wafted far and wide,
A golden ſhow'r now fructifies our plains;
Now o'er our mountains ſnowy whiteneſs reigns.
On thoſe proud rocks, with hoary ſummits crown'd,
In reſervoirs our ſtagnant ſtores abound.
Thoſe waves the zephyrs drop by drop convey,
With force collected ſap themſelves a way;

And ſlow-deſcending thro' their veins they wind
In chinky mazes, till their feet they find:
Now peeping out, their timid courſe begun,
Creep feeble rills, then rapid rivers run.
From ſnow-topt Alps, where Hannibal could go,
Ferrara boaſts her fertiliſing Po.
Impetuous child of that continu'd chain,
The Rone flows weſtward bending ſouth again.
Of diff'rent turn, tho' from one parent ſprung,
His brother ſpeaks elſewhere another tongue.
At length their mazy wand'rings to complete,
Their waters ſummon'd ſeek their native ſeat:
Rejoin the ſeas; and ſoon exhal'd again
O'er hills and dales return in genial rain.
Such is th' agreement of the gen'ral frame,
Its happy empire ne'er heard diſcord's name.
For us the whole conſpires: the mountains, ſeas,
Day's brilliant ſtar; the very bluſt'rers pleaſe.
O may like harmony inſpire mankind,
To ſeek the bliſs it no where elſe can find!

To Him the great firſt ſource then let us go,
From which all being, life and motion flow.
If he give theſe, whence ſhould he theſe receive?
If he made time, who ſhall his birth conceive?
By him all things commenc'd, heaven, earth and man:
The great Eternal onely ne'er began.

But in my ſoul what hand has trac'd ſo bright
The image uncompar'd of th' infinite?
'Twas ne'er my ſenſe, to finite things confin'd,
To things weak, wretched, and to death conſign'd,
Myſelf I place in this deplor'd eſtate,
As not unconſcious of my real fate:
Of the great Infinite I mindful grew,
From the firſt moment that myſelf I knew.
Deep with a dread of ſov'rain pow'r poſſeſs'd,
In ſpite of pride, dependance I confeſs'd.
How hard t' obey, a higher to allow!
And yet the higheſt is conſtrain'd to bow.
Before th' Eternal, prince and people fall,
And nations trembling own him Lord of all.
What force inviſible ſubjects mankind?
In ſeeking chains does man his glory find?

Yes, over all, in countries bond or free,
I temples, altars, prieſts and victims ſee:
To Heaven our vows and incenſe ever roſe.
Miſleading ſenſe indeed may oft impoſe,
The Deity's high image to degrade.
To lowing gods ſee Egypt's homage paid!
In that vile ox, to which ſhe blindly bends,
Still to a God her adoration tends.
In mad credulity bewilder'd minds
Made themſelves maſters of unnumber'd kinds.

Howe'er

Howe'er ſuch maſters ſees th' indignant ſage,
Whoe'er durſt brave them, rais'd th' adorers' rage.
All did Mezentius as Salmoneus blame,
And horror, Capaneus, ſtill hunts thy name.
An odious monſter ſtill was the profane:
And even bold Epicure, whoſe ſyſtem vain
To fight the fear of Gods ſo long has ſtrove,
Himſelf ſee proſtrate at the feet of Jove!

I hear him own, extorted from his pride,
A pow'r that human pow'r ſeems to deride;
A latent foe who ſoon to nothing brings
The pride of people, and the pomp of kings.
Kingdoms as kings, as cits ſhall cities die,
And undiſtinguiſh'd ſhall diſtinction lie.
What Athens was, that Paris now we ſee;
Where Lacedemon is, ſhall London be.
What do I ſee o'er Greece's deſert plain,
But thouſand bones of thouſand bodies ſlain?
But mournful wreck where monarchs reign'd before,
But wither'd laurels which the heroes wore;
But thrones thrown down, imperial ſceptres broke,
And Grecian freedom under Turkiſh yoke!
Where, Memphis, are thy tow'rs that proudly roſe?
Thy very ruins ſcarce great Cairo ſhows.
What coſtly tombs aſpire on every ſide,
Of human nothingneſs the lofty pride!

To that ſo dreaded pow'r each mortal bends,
All nature's incenſe to that pow'r aſcends.
The blind barbarian humbly on his knees
Labors, but ah! in vain, the waſter to appeaſe.

In diſtant climes, with gloomy foreſts crown'd,
Which far from ours the ſev'ring ſeas ſurround,
Some quiet mortals dwell, perhaps you'll ſay,
Who ne'er knew Gods, nor e'er did homage pay.
Tho' noteleſs travellers ſhould tell the tale,
How ſhall their faith, ſo often falſe, prevail?
Their tidings true even tho' we ſhould ſuppoſe,
To all mankind how ſhall I e'er oppoſe
A ſtupid wand'ring ſavage, barb'rous, blind,
Preſerving ſcarce the figure of our kind?
In woods bewilder'd, miſerable race!
Who knows no lords, no laws, no dwelling-place.
How juſt, ye libertines, the ſcorn ye draw,
If in thoſe foreſts you your fellows ſaw!

Yet theſe ſame men ſo near to brutes debas'd,
And in the night of ſenſe ſo ſadly maz'd,
With ſome faint rays of nobler image ſhine,
Some poor remains of origin divine.
The ſocial duties are not quite unknown:
The force of blood's connecting ties they own.
The ſpouſe moſt barb'rous glows with ſpouſe's fire,
Beloves his ſon, and venerates his ſire.

Nature

Nature o'er man ne'er forfeits all her rights.

But what are theſe? Imaginary ſprights,
When once I ſcorn a vengeful pow'r's controul,
Can never aw my dauntleſs free-born ſoul.
For ſelf I live, to ſelf my all is due.
Virtue's a name: my pleaſure is my view.

Thus the profane, who all his boaſts belies,
Slave to the faith, the virtue he defies.
In ſhameful pleaſures he himſelf would fly;
But his accuſer ſtands for ever by:
His judge is in his heart, where'er he go,
Th' ungrateful's cenſor, and the traitor's foe.
If by dark machinations he offends,
Hard at his heels his puniſhment attends.
To ſecret pangs a ſlowly pining ſlave,
Never yet criminal himſelf forgave.
Beneath gilt cielings pale th' ambitious lies,
Nor dares to Heaven to lift his languid eyes.
Suſpended o'er his head a dreaded ſword
Diſtaſtes the meats that crown his copious board.
Repentance cruel is the firſt *Prévôt*,
That to a guilty boſom gives the blow.
From gnawing ſpleen Tiberius' flatt'ring train
To turn his mind exert their arts in vain.
The world's ſole maſter, who can mar his mirth?
What law, what judge has he to fear on earth?

And

And yet he pines, he groans; his vices black
Are his accuſers, judges, and his rack.
Still drunk with blood, too thirſty ſtill to ſpare,
He by his deeds abandon'd to deſpair
Shows to the Senate, while he makes it ſmart,
The woful image of his wounded heart.
Conſum'd by new regrets, he dies each day,
More wretched than the ſlaves that own his ſway.

Unchang'd, eternal thus are Virtue's laws:
Nor men nor monarchs can ſubvert her cauſe.
The Gods whom we with ſtupid worſhip grac'd,
Her conſtant beauty never quite effac'd.
The Romans 'ſelves, howe'er a ſpurious breed,
In Venus' ſpite, admir'd Lucretia's deed.

By that innate, inwritten law I know
Whate'er to ſire, ſon, ſpouſe, or ſelf I ow.
Each moment in that code ſupreme I read
The law that theft and treaſon crimes decree'd;
That law, which ſtood in force from age to age,
Before Lycurgus ſtern, or Solon ſage.
Nay e'er yet Rome twelve tables had ordain'd,
Metius and Tarquin were no leſs arrain'd.
I'd cruſh a rival: what reſtrains my arm?
I would, I can; yet I with-hold the harm!
More from my heart a doom condign I dread,
Than from a court with Juſtice at its head.

Virtue, who ſtill to wiſe delights aſpires,
Seems too ſevere in curbing our deſires.
T' obey her mandates, tho' it coſt ſome pain,
However hard, we bleſs her charming reign.
Her very rival, like a darken'd ſtar,
Envies her beams with rev'rence from afar.
In Virtue's noble ſemblance oft diſguis'd,
Vice ſtrives to ſooth the ſoul he has ſurpris'd

What long regrets, O Virtue ſtill ador'd,
Thou leav'ſt a heart where thou art not reſtor'd!
To him that hates thee, is thy preſence pain:
Break forth effulgent: let him quake again.
Tho' Riches fly thee, and tho' Fortune frown,
Thy friend is Peace, thy follower is Renown.
Whoe'er for thee deſpiſes pow'r or pelf,
That happy man ſuffices to himſelf.
But when without thee we would live content,
Intruding Virtue, why ſhouldſt thou torment?
Why by remorſe thus o'er us tyranniſe?
Who gave thee right the guilty to chaſtiſe?
Let us alone; no more ſo charming be:
May none be quiet without loving thee?
Oh no: thy preſence, let us hate or love,
Or our deſpair, or our reward will prove.

Who then, great God, can e'er miſtake thee more?
Thro' all thou ſpeak'ſt; but mens diſtracted lore

Hears not thy voice, or minds not what it ſays.
To us thy wonders while the world diſplays;
Charm'd with the goods thou haſt on earth beſtow'd,
Our eyes ne'er trace the fountain whence they flow'd.
Still ſome new maſter does our hearts eſtrange,
For objects new our ſouls ſtill reſtleſs range;
While we remain but far from thee away.
What crime, what curſe has led us thus aſtray?
Are, O my God, our woes without reſource?
Let's ſound their depth, aſcend we to their ſource.
Now to my eyes the ſcene of man be free:
When I've known him, I'll know the better Thee.

RELIGION.

CANTO II.

FROM earlieſt youth in thy bleſt ſtatutes bred,
By ſacred Faith to ſolid Reaſon led,
Indulge, O Lord, that in poetic ſtrain
The ſtate I figure, and the ſtyle I fein,
Of a poor mortal, who in troubles toſt,
Tow'rds Thee inveſtigates the truth he loſt.

When firſt emerging 'midſt alarms and fears
I to my mother's cries reply'd by tears,
I enter'd life, with an eſcort of pains,
To walk the round where woe ſucceſſive reigns.
My firſt days' food I in that ſtranger find,
Who ſells me with her milk her venal mind,
Warm'd in her boſom, in her arms careſs'd,
And ſenſeleſs long to all her zeal expreſs'd,
At length a ſmile ſome pleaſing hopes convey'd;
My feeble reaſon now I firſt eſſay'd.

Struck

Struck with the ſound of words, on things intent,
I traits diſtinguiſh'd, and could names accent.
I knew, I nam'd, I hugg'd my dear pappa:
I heard, leſs pleas'd, the voice of good mamma.
Correction back'd the unavailing nod;
Of woful maſters next I fear'd the rod:
From one the ſtory of paſt ages flow'd,
And one more loathſome would my mem'ry load
With terms moſt barb'rous of another tongue.
But time brought taſte; and fruit from learning ſprung.
With Eſchines I felt the ſpeaker's rage;
I read enraptur'd Homer's fabled page.
Of hapleſs Dido now the woes I ſhar'd,
And oft her water'd pile my grief declar'd.
With childiſh things my manly mind was cloy'd;
But was its bent more ſolidly employ'd?
With truths abſtruſe ſometimes profoundly caught,
I hop'd to penetrate a Newton's thought.
Sometimes a barren problem I'd purſue,
And now Deſcartes's whole ſyſtem I o'erthrew:
New worlds at my expence aroſe in air,
Quick as Armida rear'd her caſtles there.
Eſtabliſh'd fame avail'd not when I ſpoke:
Each ancient vortex vaniſh'd into ſmoke.
By my anatomy a parted ray
Now into ſeven was ſubtilis'd away;

To firſt of colors ſcar'd my daring ſight,
And my bold calcul would ſubject the light.
In pleaſing dreams what time have I miſpent,
On every ſcience, but myſelf intent!
At length my mind recall'd its wand'ring ſenſe,
And Recollection mourn'd her negligence;
To know myſelf my ardor now was fir'd:
'Twas nought but pride the project had inſpir'd.
O fatal knowlege! while I drag thy chain,
How oft I wiſh my ignorance again?

That hapleſs man in image I portray,
Who from a long repoſe ſurpris'd away,
Beholds an unknown ile offend his ſight,
Where deſerts drear and rocks on rocks affright.
Trembling he riſes, and with hagard eye,
Surveys the objects that ſtand ſtaring by.
Anon he nods again, now wakes once more,
Nor farther dares the pathleſs wild t' explore.
Such was my terror, ſoon as opening eyes
And breaking ſleep's, perhaps officious, ties,
I ſaw myſelf alone, without defence,
Loſt in a corner of this ſpace immenſe;
An earth-worm vile, that earth's ſole monarch reigns;
Rich, void of wealth; at freedom and in chains.
In falſehood and uncertainty I ſtray,
When truth's purſuit becomes my ſole eſſay.

Now

Now the whole world lifts up its voice to me,
T' announce the Lord I ſeek; that Lord I ſee:
Now the whole world in ſilence deep diſgrac'd,
Preſents my wand'ring eyes a dreary waſte.
Why com'ſt thou, Nature, thus my peace to gall?
Or clearly ſpeak, or never ſpeak at all.
Aſk we no more where we no anſwer find;
If our ambition does but maze our mind,
Be ours the earth: the earth for us was made.

Oh no; its pleaſures pall, its flowers fade.
Not one aſſwages my devouring pain:
I wiſh, I win, and then I wiſh again.
Great God, then give me goods more worthy thee,
At leaſt give ſuch as may be worthy me.
What pride! 'tis ſtriking thus a jarring ſtring:
I'm firſt the vaineſt, then the vileſt thing;
And now a nothing am, and now a king.

Nor pleas'd with objects which my zeal purſues,
I love myſelf alone, all elſe refuſe;
Or if I ſeem to love it, 'tis for me:
And yet I hate me, when myſelf I ſee.
I cannot live alone: thro' forain ties
I ſtrive to pleaſe the perſons I deſpiſe.

Can then my mis'ry, horrid to advance!
A gracious maſter's glory e'er enhance?

Far other joys he has reſerv'd for man;
Nor does our preſent ſtate complete his plan.
Yes, earth's juſt arbiter, I've this recourſe,
Of ſolid peace, thou pure and pregnant ſource,
O thou who ſee'ſt all things, whom none can ſee,
Touch'd with thy ſubjects' woes when ſhalt thou be?
Thou tender parent, who behold'ſt our fears,
Canſt thou for ever ſee thy children's tears?
No, no, I hope, and will the hope embrace:
Thy bounty deſtines us a better place.

But how regain my glory? what's the coſt?
Who can reſtore the happineſs I've loſt?
In friends or fellows ſhall I find it, ſay? (away,
I look; they're gone: by Death they're ſnatch'd
And ſtruck before myſelf, to grave they go:
I ſoon ſhall join them: where? I do not know.

Is it then true, and not a pleaſing dream?
O king of terrors, who can ſooth thy theme?
O king of terrors, can it ever be
That our bleſt ſouls have nought to fear from thee?
That at the moment which deprives of day,
Thy victims do but change their place of ſtay;
And at the inſtant when thy ſable ſhade,
My body in the deepeſt dark has laid,

That

That I ſhould live! ſweet hope! expectance bleſt!

With what ambition is thy pride poſſeſs'd?
Cries th' impious wit, vain vapor, is it thine
T' expect immortal glory, life divine?
By chance we firſt were form'd, by chance decay,
And like a fleeting ſhadow paſs away.
Ye wretches, ſee the end of your diſtreſs;
And ye ambitious, now your hopes repreſs.
Death puts an end to all: all dies with us.
Why daſtard mortals, why then dread it thus?
For what ſo ſhocking does a bier diſplay?
But lifeleſs aſhes and unconſcious clay?
We find no more or pleaſure there or pain.
Pray who can curſe ſweet reſt's eternal reign?
Then plunge we dauntleſs in this mute abode,
Where vice and virtue beat one common road:
And cultivating pleaſure's lovely lore,
Let's glide into the grave, and be no more.

And now Lucretius' maſter, let's attend!
Uſurps the noble name of Wiſdom's friend,
With ſuttle ſophiſtry the ſcheme defends,
While Lucrece' ſelf the aid of numbers lends.
Of heavenly harmony unworthy uſe!
Of both their pow'rs behold the joint abuſe.

That mind, O mortals, ye ſo highly priſe,
Is but a flame that lives with you and dies.
When by deep furrows unrelenting age
Has on the hideous brow impreſs'd its rage;
When with the load of days the body bends,
The blood its courſe as with reluctance ends;
Not preſent objects clear to eyes o'ercaſt,
The mem'ry now no more retains the paſt;
The feeble knees no pow'r, no ſcience ſaves;
The tongue too falters, and the ſpirit raves:
The crazy frame diminiſhing each day,
With equal pace I ſee the mind decay.
The dying ſoul, now an unnouriſh'd beam
Darts at ſome intervals a gloomy gleam.
Sad fate of man! to grave he ſinks a child,
Weaker than in the cradle ſuch he ſmil'd.
Death with the fatal blow the fabric mines,
And in a ſigh completes his dire deſigns.
The heart congeals bereft of circling ſtore;
The ſoul evaporates: the man's no more.

Mov'd by thy ſong, if I thy paths purſue,
Of a too famous maſter bard too true,
Bereft henceforward of my bliſsful hope,
I make of pleaſure now my onely ſcope,
Devote the moments of my rapid courſe
To her of joys, of laughs, of loves the ſource;

And thy dear Deity become my guide
Muſt o'er my life as o'er thy verſe preſide.
Yet if, when man has run his mortal race,
He nought but nothing has at laſt t' embrace,
Can I taſte pleaſures of the preſent ſtate,
Such feeble ſoothers of impending fate?
Thou fain wouldſt chear me; but thou ſink'ſt me low.
Shall I live joyous, in the midſt of woe;
When ev'n I have not where my mind to reſt,
Tir'd with enquiring where it may be bleſt?
In joy's ſweet flood a certain bitter ſprings,
'Midſt faireſt flow'rs a ſecret thorn that ſtings:
Kings, ſubjects, all complain: even Epicure,
Pleaſure's own orator, declares it ſure.
Let him deſcant. Fair Reaſon, come to me,
I'll onely meditate and learn with thee.

I think, That glorious light that guides my tongue,
My every motion, ne'er from matter ſprung:
I glimpſe my greatneſs. This unwieldy frame
Is not the all I am, the all I claim.
When deep in thought I form ſublime deſires,
A nobler being than my frame inſpires.
In this ſame ſelf by wondrous ties combin'd
Two beings oppoſite at one I find:
This of groſs fleſh and blood aſſemblage vile!
But that a beam of God, his breath, his ſmile.

By links ſo ſecret this bleſt pair ally'd,
Their deareſt int'reſts ſeldom can divide:
Their pleaſures common, common are their pains.
The ſoul the body's guide, ſhould hold the reins.
But when from cruel woes the body feels,
Sometimes the ſoul's juſt empire alſo reels.
As in a ſhatter'd hulk, the tackling loſt,
By tempeſts batter'd, and by billows toſt!
The frighted pilot, maſter now no more,
Roars out in vain; the waves far louder roar:
Till with the ſailors yielding to the ſea,
He periſhes; but ours from wreck is free.
How ſhould he periſh? ſince the fatal blow
Unlocks his chains, and gives his ſprings to go;
A being ſimple, pure, nought can deſtroy,
Nor Death a triumph o'er the ſoul enjoy.
But what! thoſe very bodies Earth has got,
Muſt they to nought return, becauſe they rot?
Or are they loſt, becauſe they diſappear?
From reas'ning minds avaunt the idle fear!
In all her changes Nature has maintain'd
The pow'r of keeping what ſhe once has gain'd.
In vain, O ſublimating alchymiſt,
Thou rich in ſmoke, invok'ſt thy Triſmegiſt.
Thy art ſhall never ought annihilate:
That ſalt thou may'ſt diſſolve, evaporate;

But

But learn the weakneſs of thy airy trade,
Who made that ſalt, that ſalt immortal made,
The honor of producing doſt enjoy,
When not the pow'r thou proveſt to deſtroy?
A grain of ſalt or ſand ſhall death defy;
And ſhall what thinks within me, fear to dy?
What then's that moment when no life remains?
'Tis then the ſoul its liberty regains:
The body ſprung from duſt, rejoins the ſame;
The ſpirit flies to regions whence it came.

Who can diſpute it then its birth divine?
That ſpirit, whom not matter's bonds confine,
When full of its deſcent, it takes its flight,
And brings ſuch riches from the realms of light,
Where elſe, O Plato, learnedſt thou to ſoar?
Or Socrates who dy'dſt for virtue's lore?
Deſcartes, who oft haſt rapt me up with thee;
Paſcal, whom on the earth I ſcarce can ſee:
And ye, who fire us with your pleaſing rage,
Ye poets who enchant each wond'ring age;
Virgil, whom Homer taught the way to fame,
Boileau, Corneille, and thou I dare not name,
Your ſpirits were they ſparks that flaſh away,
The rapid meteors of a paſſing day?

O ye, whoſe mighty names from death are free,
A partner of your lot why can't I be?

Ah!

Ah! why corroded by this wild deſire,
Beyond my life why ſhould my vows aſpire?
By ſhining works I labor to diſſolve
That night where envious time would me involve.
The breath of future ages fans me near:
What they ſhall ſay of me I hope or fear.
I'd be eternal: in this vain deſign
I learn that immortality is mine.
Each good that periſhes my pow'rs diſown:
Great God, to fill my ſoul is thine alone.
If to a moment's joys I bound my thought,
Was't for that moment I was call'd from nought?
If deathleſs glory is in vain my hope,
How have my faculties this onely ſcope?

When on this wretched earth I ſee with pain
Meek virtue groaning under ſorrow's reign;
A gracious Lord I ken in this diſtreſs,
And order in diſorder I confeſs.
Whate'er he now permits he will repair,
And bids man hope a happier ſtate to ſhare.
Yes, for another time, the righteous ſire
Retains his goodneſs and reſerves his ire.

The fabling poets, ſtill with fiction fraught
Firſt in their ſongs, you'll ſay, theſe tenets taught;
And ſoon as Greece, replete with Homer's name,
Had of the gloomy reign admir'd the fame,

The people frighted with the furies' noiſe,
Were ſooth'd with ſonnets of Elyſium's joys

Dire Pluto was their work; they made to reel
Ixion erſt extended on his wheel.
The Stygian ſtream that flow'd at their command,
Lock'd the black dungeons of the nine-fold land.
Poor Tantalus was their deluded ſlave,
Who vainly courted the retiring wave.
By th' urn of Minos, and his ſtern decrees
They made the very ſouls of men to freeze,
Who heard a wretched ghoſt with rueful tone
Send up to heaven and earth its piteous moan:
By all the pangs I feel in theſe abodes,
Learn, learn, O mortals, to revere the Gods.
Could theſe bold forgers of important lies
Have found of docil hearers freſh ſupplies,
Without that voice more pow'rful far than theirs,
Which from the heart's receſs to man declares,
A Judge awaits us, whoſe impartial hand
On every deed ſhall wave the dread command?
The innocent no more ſhall be deplor'd;
Let's hope and ſuffer; all ſhall be reſtor'd.

In hopes of vengeance Socrates we ſee
Submit to his baſe country's black decree,

Proſcrib'd

Proſcrib'd unjuſtly, then content expire;
And to his lateſt moment would admire,
Did he not name, what I regret to ſay,
The victim he to Eſculap would pay:
How weak the ſtrongeſt mind! how apt to ſtray!

What do I ſay? no wonder if my own,
With nobler minds as far aſtray is gone.
Thy pompous promiſes of endleſs life,
O Reaſon, with my faith are ſtill at ſtrife.
How now! that darkling ſoul ſo apt to dream,
Of the bright Deity is that a beam?
All-glorious God, canſt own that image thine?
Is man thy work, Artificer divine?
Within a body's bounds, 'tis true, I'm pent:
But of what crime is this the puniſhment.
I knew no guilt when firſt I felt my wo:
'Tis riddle all! and muſt it ſtill be ſo?
What have I done, O pitying Reaſon, ſay:
Alas! thou'rt mute, nor dain'ſt to be my ſtay.
Then what is man from men themſelves I'd know,
Whence he is come, and whither he muſt go.
Unmov'd by my complaints I ſee them all
Haſte to amuſements which their works they call.
They rear, demoliſh, they intrigue, they ſcheme;
They heap up writings, a bewitching theme!

One mad with verſe, vain fruit of bliſsful eaſe,
Believes God made him onely words to teaſe.
Another ſagely ſits to hear our cauſe,
And dictates an eternal round of laws.
A hundred times, I own, I've been inclin'd
Like them my mis'ries to expel my mind,
And riſking without pain my hapleſs ſoul
Expect my fate from chance's wild controul.
Some, I've been told, to ſever right from wrong,
In learned leiſure meditated long:
Their lucubrations Grecia's fame complete;
In Athens' ſchool fair Wiſdom fix'd her ſeat.
To bid this ſcene ſtand forth with due command,
O for a Titian's, or a Raphael's hand!

Ye heroes fam'd, ye rev'rend ſages, hail!
But what! can diſcord 'mongſt the wiſe prevail
From maſters mutually divided ſpring
Divided followers in name and thing.
Thoſe follies make poor Heraclitus cry,
Which laughter to Democritus ſupply.
But to our woes what ſalve do they impart?
Seek they the cauſe, and do they cure the heart?
O thou, who ſought'ſt for light amidſt the glooms
Of Death's domain, what ſay the ſilent tombs?
" The atoms wand'ring in a boundleſs waſte,
" Declining from their courſe by chance embrac'd:

" Uneven hardneſſes with eaſe combin'd,
" And Nature found in Chance a parent kind;
" The eye below the brow transfix'd its cell,
" The arms on either ſide began to dwell:
" Earth harden'd happily beneath our feet:
" The univerſe aroſe as bodies meet.
" And, ſtranger ſtill! if ſtranger Chance could do,
" Free thinking beings were its offspring too."
Thy fame, Hippocrates, thy pity more
Claims all thy art his reaſon to reſtore.
To water gen'ral ſource hear Thales call!
While Anaximenes cries, air made all.
'Twas fire the weeping ſage eſſays to prove,
Gave infant univerſe's ſprings to move.
Pyrrho found nothing certain but his dout;
For fear of error he would take no rout.
Senſeleſs to life or death, he neither knows
Whether he wakes or ſleeps, or ſtands or goes;
And midſt th' impetuous ſtorm the lazy dog
Is well exampled in the ſtupid hog.
Of cloke and wallet proud, yon haughty ſoul
Teaches the taſk of life—a tun to roll:
Yes, light in hand the ſnarling ſage I ſpy;
He ſeeks a man, and is the fool I fly.

Sure 'tis enough thoſe two bright orbs to view:
Say, Anaxagoras, who made them you?

But

But what ſweet voice enchants my raviſh'd ear,
While Epicure in gardens ſlumbers here?
What crouds of vot'ries con their leſſons keen,
At eaſe extended on the downy green!
Haſte, haſte, ye wretches, this your life t' enjoy,
Faſt as the fatal ſiſter to deſtroy:
To nought her ciſars bring you and your lore:
Quick, ſnatch this moment by one pleaſure more.
Your rival ſtubborn, pale in gloom profound,
Makes with big words the portico reſound.
His voice and virtue almoſt turn my brain:
I cannot ſmile like him amidſt my pain;
I dare to deem it and declare it woe,
Ere yet the gout compel to feel it ſo.
Th' academy by Plato's voice ſerene
Now diſſipates in me old Zeno's ſpleen.
But how on Plato's ſelf ſhall I repoſe,
Whoſe very maſter boaſts he nothing knows.
He ventures nothing, doutful where t' abide:
He ſtops, he heſitates, will ne'er decide:
By ſome faint truths he hardly can conſole:
He douts, he heſitates, he damps my ſoul.
Lo! his diſciple leaves him, jealous, vain;
Retires, and would have me to ſwell his train.
To anxious man, of th' awful future day
Great Alexander's maſter nought will ſay.

What do his ſkill or morals ſignify,
If without hope's bleſt beam he let me dy.
Far from the tedious retors Grecia boaſts,
The myſtic calls me to Italian coaſts.
Death, if we credit him, ſhould ne'er appal:
We do but change, we never dy at all;
And man and beaſt by an agreement ſtrange
Of ſouls reſpective make an odd exchange.
From jail to jail confin'd by turns they ſtray,
And only loſe the light to find the day.
Sad immortality! poor recompence
Of ſo long ſilence, and ſuch abſtinence.

Philoſophers! ye janglers, ſtill contend:
An ear too long I to your errors lend.
Stunn'd with your pompous words that dazzle fools,
More vex'd than ever I depart your ſchools.
You promiſe marvels: from each mighty name
I every thing expected, nothing came.
Ariſto's ſon alone I muſt revere:
He foe to falſehood, bids me falſehood fear.
He trembles as he goes, and tow'rds the truth
I feel his caution guide my erring youth.
A bleſt futurity from him I learn;
And of a gracious God the pow'r diſcern.
But if he love me, in diſorder wild
Why lets he languiſh his unhappy child?

Why of ſuch honor and ſo much diſgrace
In me the motley mixture do I trace?
Each loving father, of like wealth and worth,
Enriches thoſe to whom he gave their birth:
The being ever bleſt his works muſt bleſs,
And conſcious love embrace its images.
We're puniſh'd: but has he expounded why
The earth is an exile, an exile I?
What am I? but alas! the more I'd know,
More pain and anguiſh in my boſom glow.
What am I? who can ſolve this dout to me?
There Plato, there's a queſtion worthy thee!
But Plato ſpeaks not; or I hear him own
The need of a ſupreme orac'lar throne.
If Plato ſpeaks not, who ſhall be my aid?
I ſtill muſt wander in the diſmal ſhade.
In this thick cloud what flambow ſhall I find?
From this dark dedalus what clew ſhall wind?
Who ſhall unlock the horrid chaos there?
My heart is loſt in madneſs and deſpair.
Doom'd to ſelf-ignorance! how hard the fate!
Me rather pitying Death annihilate.
Thy rigor, Heaven, I on my knees deſire;
Vouchſafe to cruſh the object of thine ire:
Ye mountains cover me; Earth, ope thy jaws:
If I am faulty, ſwallow all my flaws;

For ever blaſted be the hapleſs morn,
When to my ſire they ſaid, *a ſon is born.*

Of this my cruel ſtate when I deſpair,
To ſeek a God with Plato is my care.
I learn an ancient race even yet retains
A heaven-endited book in holy ſtrains.
If this be true, I fly. But oh! what rout?
What people or what book? how find them out?
If God has ſpoke, I can no longer dout.

Seeking this God's true law on every ſide,
Among ſo many men I find no guide:
They're ſunk in eaſe alas! unworthy brutes,
Or plung'd in no leſs frivolous purſuits.
Their preſent pleaſure is their ſole affair:
Their greateſt int'reſt is their ſmalleſt care.
Montagne amuſes with his liſtleſs dream,
And dwells ſuſpended on the doutful beam.
It is not to the goal that Bayle would go:
'Tis th' obſtacle he loves, and not to know.
For thee, vile author of a gloomy ſcheme,
Who of the whole wouldſt frame the One ſupreme,
Who dazzling with big words dim-ſighted eyes,
Annihilat'ſt the God thou mak'ſt to riſe;
Wrapt in thy cloud's impenetrable gloom:
Secure from me thou may'ſt poſſeſs thy tomb.

To ſound the depth of thine obſcurity,
Thy foll'wers bold ſhall place their pride for me;
And jealous of what I ſhall ne'er conteſt,
Diſpute the glory who conceives thee beſt.
But leſs bewild'ring are the deiſt's boaſts;
Content with Reaſon, he ne'er quits the coaſts,
She his ſole pilot, hers his only light.

Open thine eyes, ingrate, and know her right:
Nor dream that Reaſon lightens only thee:
Thou ſoon to Faith ſhalt ſee her carry me.
To hail the opening day ſhe calls my pride,
And teaches me to ſeek a better guide.
I ow to Reaſon a Religion's lore;
And now with Reaſon will her friend explore.

RELIGION.

CANTO III.

HOLY Religion, hail! in all thy charms
Far more reſiſtleſs than the Roman arms!
Thy milder and no leſs extended ſway
Commands my eyes, attentive to obey.
Thy rebel ſons, in error loſt, agree
To own thy God, altho' they fled from thee.
The north is Chriſtian, and the eaſtern coaſts
Are ſown with men who each this title boaſts.
I ſee the Ottoman with ſword in hand,
With that of Muſulman thy name withſtand.
Methinks with hoſts in martial horrors hurl'd,
The Chriſt and Mahomet diſpute the world.
But Mecca's famous fugitive in vain
Enthrals the eaſt in his capricious chain;
Or near the tomb the proud Medina's truſt,
Turks, Arabs, Perſians humbly kiſs the duſt:
That dreaded book which gives the turban law,
And makes the ſultan eye the ſeer with aw;

Endited

Endited to the prophet by the dove;
Declares him but the ſecond from above;
That Chriſt the firſt Meſſiah, long before,
Came loſt mankind's true greatneſs to reſtore.
The rival to the God of Chriſtian pray'rs,
Himſelf does homage to the name he dares.
Thee, Chriſtian, I admire, to thee return:
Both hemiſpheres with thy bleſt ardors burn.
Doſt thou poſſeſs the oracles divine?
Inſtruct me what religion then is thine.

If to her truth thy wiſe purſuit would tend,
To her antiquity do but aſcend.
Thou might'ſt her birth and age from ſtory ſcan,
If her true glory were the work of man.
With univerſe ſhe draws her date ſublime,
And one bleſt day gave birth to her and time.
Man ſprung from nought ſcarce enter'd error's road,
When guiltleſs blood for him already flow'd.
My archives, human annals yet divine,
From the firſt people's hands have paſt to mine.
When heaven vouchſaf'd, who men with pity ſaw,
A book ſhould treaſure its eternal law;
To Iſrael's ſons, then God-belov'd and brave,
This high depoſit heavenly Moſes gave.
His ſeed preſerv'd the heritage begun,
Which now each ſire tranſmitted to his ſon.

In this bleſt book by them with rev'rence ſeen,
The very tale of words has ſacred been:
They tremble leſt a bold and impious hand
Should change a letter of their dread command:
That law, which of their long and cruel woes
Sets forth the juſt foundation to their foes.
T' announce the juſtice of their vengeful God,
They bear about the ſentence of their rod,
Without or cities, kings, or holy place,
Vanquiſh'd and vagabond, mankind's diſgrace.
Nor need'ſt thou of their ills the cauſe demand:
Go read the book that ſhows it, in their hand.
There thou ſhalt trace the people, and ſhalt ſee
What once they were, and what they once muſt be.

I ſtop, and wond'ring at a ſcene ſo new,
This people, or this miracle I view.
Sprung from a blood, which ne'er has known an end,
And with a forain blood could never blend;
All Jacob's ſons one great forefather own,
As brethren link'd, tho' loſt in lands unknown.
The ſame religion, law-giver the ſame;
They venerate all one great author's name:
And all thoſe wretches o'er the world we ſee,
Make one diſpers'd and wand'ring family.
In vain th' Aſſyrians, Medes, we now explore;
Ye Parthians, Punics, Romans, are no more:

And where, proud Saracen, is now thy fame?
Of thee what yet remains? an empty name.
Thoſe ſtate-deſtroyers time-deſtroy'd have been,
And earth a hundred times new ſons has ſeen;
While one poor race, whom every race diſdains,
Perſiſts to ſhow its mis'rable remains.

What value we, ſay they, your cruel gibes,
If Abram's God immortaliſe our tribes?
No, no. The living God, whoſe words remain,
Has ſworn: his oath ſhall not be ſworn in vain.
The ſolemn covenant he has not tore
Which he to Iſrael gave in days of yore;
Upon his happy ſons *a ſtar ſhall ſhine*,
And forth ſhall ſpring a chief of Jacob's line.
Of God forgot tho' we may ſeem to ſome,
We ever hope for him who is to come.
Amidſt our laſting woes ſtill faith inſpires;
We wait the king expected by our ſires.
Th' important day to them announc'd, no dout,
Should ſhine on us; and now its term is out:
Yet let's beware, interpreters too bold,
Of calculating times by prophets told.
Curs'd be the man who has to count aſpir'd
The days ſo oft foretold, ſo long expir'd.
Not that the Lord repents, or can be wrong;
But if our expectation he prolong,

How with a maſter ſhall a ſlave contend?
Yet to this bold attempt you dare pretend,
Ye Chriſtians, jealous of our happineſs,
Who think our promis'd object you poſſeſs.
Ah! with what ardor, had that Lord appear'd,
Had his bleſt banner all his people chear'd!
Beneath his arms how he would make you groan,
And pay with intereſt our laſting moan!

Thus ſpeak the blinded Jews: but what believe?
Nor crime nor puniſhment can I conceive.
Their king heaven-promis'd, if he can't deſcend,
If then his term's elaps'd, why ſtill attend?
They ever will: the oracle's pronounc'd:
Wrapt in the darkening veil ſo oft denounc'd.
Of that fam'd volume's ancient authors then
God, who alone knows times, has led the pen.
That book is doubtleſs ſacred, where I ſee
So many prophecies fulfill'd to me.
I henceforth ſhall revere its truth divine,
And there inveſtigate Religion's line.

I open, and am with the blaze repell'd,
When man ſcarce made his majeſty beheld;
Beheld, but could not ſo much glory bear:
His glory prov'd his ſhame; for pride was there.
The tempting angel made him quickly yield:
He loſt his titles to the bliſsful field;

Titles tranſmiſſive ere the fatal fall:
But ſoverain juſtice now revok'd them all.
Th' unchang'd decree of an eternal woe
Had fix'd the gloomy angel's fate below.
Guilty like him, tho' yet leſs wretched far,
When Nature's hoſts in one denounc'd us war;
Man heard the pleaſing ſound of future grace,
And in his very doom could mercy trace.
Now flows from age to age what then began,
The glorious work of re-eſtabliſh'd man;
And his Reſtorer then as now we find,
Or ſignified or ſent, unites mankind.

This wondrous book the wondrous ſecret ſhows
To Plato and to me of all our woes.
My eyes are open, and the clouds diſperſe:
I ſee the blight that blaſts the univerſe.
I ſee Guilt enter with her woful train,
A myſt'ry to myſelf no more remain;
The knot unties, and now the beams that light
Of this dark chaos have diſpell'd the night.

But can the harmleſs babe inherit pain?---
This dout alas! brings on the cloud again.
Once more 'tis chaos all that I can ſee:
God, man, and univerſe are dark to me.
But I believe; that inſtant all is light:
God, man and univerſe emerge to ſight:

The

The work, disfigur'd now, was perfect made:
Let's ſcan how far deluded man has ſtray'd.
The guilty father of a baniſh'd band
With helpleſs wretches fills a curſed land;
To lengthen days conſign'd to conſtant ſmarts,
Spring daughters of our woes, the ſiſter arts.
The branch obeys the ſev'ring arm, and cracks;
Then faſhion'd by the ſteel, prolongs the ax.
Reluctant now it hears th' inhuman call;
Firſt mines, then makes its parent tree to fall:
The dancing ſpindle waits the fair's command,
While weightier weapons own a weightier hand.
With blows on blows the anvil groans, I hear:
The file corrodes the ſteel, and grates my ear.
A liquid ſtops the traveler's retreat;
To wattled wood he truſts his timid feet.
With-held by fear, by ſtronger int'reſt toſt,
He puſhes trembling; and the flood is croſt.
Anon they dare to tempt the varying gales,
And on the deep expand their ample ſails.
Ere yet they're doom'd to eat their bread with pain,
With many a ſigh they bruiſe the lab'ring grain.
A flowing fountain, or a breathing wind,
Affords their feeble arms relief, we find;
But theſe bleſt aids, ſo obvious when they're told,
Shall not be known, until the world be old.

Man

Man born to bear what ignorance ſhall lay,
Whence draw'ſt thy arrogance, blind mortal, ſay?

While need, while induſtry, while time imparts
Each its reſpective pow'r t' improve the arts;
The crimes begot by pride, the world's worſt foe,
Give ſteel to glitter, and make blood to flow.
The firſt that fill'd the drunken fields with dread
Was that alas! a brother's fury ſhed.
The miſcreants falling then from bad to worſe,
Importun'd heaven to ſend a gen'ral curſe:
Till, ſlow t' inflict, nor able more to brook,
Their mighty maſter ſignal vengeance took.
Earth's weeping face with waters overflown,
All now lies buried: human race is gone.
But one finds grace; who quickly ſhall reſtore
New people to the new-appearing ſhore.
Earth vigorous no more for mortals' uſe
Of all her fruits has loſt the kindly juice.
By death he now muſt live, thrice wretched man!
Fleſh turn'd his cruel food! his days a ſpan!

The fabling poets, whoſe audacious art
To true and falſe one color can impart,
Man's diſregard of total fiction fear'd,
So fab'lous tales on faithful records rear'd;
And idle ears the better to content
Sought their firſt marvels in each great event.

Hence

Hence thoſe fam'd times they ſtill regret with rage;
Mild Rhea's empire and the golden age;
Where without need of law, or dread of chain,
Fair Virtue's lore made ſacred Juſtice reign.
Bleſt age of gold, ſince this thy name renown'd;
Age far more bleſt, where gold was never found!
Where temp'rate man made each deſire his ſlave,
Contented with the bounties nature gave.
Then tardy Death approach'd with ling'ring pace:
Man neither courted nor abhorr'd his face.
Till tir'd with ſpoiling oaks of fattening fruit,
He tried the iron on the timid brute.
The whizzing ſhaft the rapid bird purſu'd:
The guiltleſs lamb his guilty hand imbru'd.
To blood inur'd, and ceaſing quite to feel,
Againſt himſelf he turn'd the fatal ſteel.
And now with crimes the earth was cover'd o'er,
When a dread deluge drown'd the guilty ſhore.
Still every thing recals this great event:
Truth, fiction, phyſics join with one conſent.
Thus to the Hebrews' book all homage pays,
Which Fable ſeems to ape her fame to raiſe.
But leave we Fable in her courſe to ſtray;
And trace we Truth in her unerring way.

Earth rears her ouſy head, and ſees around
Fruits, men and arts appear, no longer drown'd.

All

All now revives; our woes and crimes invade.
Aſſembling men firſt ſeek the nodding ſhade:
But fear ſoon bids to ſafer azyls tend;
Down ſink the ditches, and the tow'rs aſcend.
Againſt each other's each now takes his way:
They ſap, ſubvert, they plunder and they ſlay.
Unjuſt and cruel man, of nought afraid,
Whom even thy God repented to have made;
Wretch, whoſe ſhort ſpan is ſhorten'd in the land,
Why gleams the iron in thy murd'ring hand?
Has Heaven ſtill left thee too great length of days?
That thou t' abridge them more ſhouldſt ſeek ſuch ways.
What int'reſt moves to earn the warrior's praiſe?
All equal, all ſupreme, the earth controul:
By nought poſſeſſing, all poſſeſs the whole.
This field's my property, this canton mine.
That brook—from me thou'lt force it, if 'tis thine.
If late thro' thy demene it chanc'd to go,
Why may it not in mine as ſweetly flow?
A buſh is now uſurp'd, now ſtorm'd a tree;
A king, a conqu'ror will the victor be.
He bends that river thro' his vaſt domain;
And now yon diſtant mountain bounds his reign.
Lo, Alexander brave, bravo no more,
Founds a vaſt empire on th' unbounded ſhore;

An upſtart ſway alarms his full-blown pow'r:
Now nations, kingdoms own their infant hour.
Earth views vaſt potentates on every ſide,
Who into haughty ſtates her dirt divide:
And now prepar'd for majeſty ſhe ſees
Thrones, purples, palaces, crowns, ſcepters, knees.

But when by violence their right is got,
The right of Heaven o'er them becomes forgot;
Man ſeeking God whoſe memory expires,
Finds him, he thinks, in all that he admires.
Thus from yon ſtar which beams each morn ſo bright,
His deſtiny he waits as well as light.
Of thoſe dead fires that roll o'er ſea and land,
The trembling nations victories demand:
For gifts a fellow-genius can impart,
They worſhip th' author of each uſeful art.
At her Oſiris' feet ſee Egypt low!
In vain a monument his duſt can ſhow.
A coarſe-cut ſtone, we ſee, ſupplies his place.
A rotting trunk becomes a God with grace:
The howling Anubis's ſhameful buſt
Makes the wiſe people humbly lick the duſt.
Relentleſs Ammon's horrors next deter:
The prieſt, the pious executioner,
In form aſſwages barb'rous Moloch's ire
With blood of ſon, and with the tears of ſire.

Faſt

Faſt by this guilty God another ſtands,
Honor'd by vile, impure, inceſtuous hands;
Chemoſh, who gluts groſs Moab's victims down,
To his adorers makes their crimes renown.
What groans, what doleful cries offend my ears!
Sidonian maids Adonis hail with tears:
His charms were ſnapt by ſacrilegious tooth;
Each year reminds to mourn the lovely youth.
And thee, learn'd Greece, ſhall thoſe mad griefs delude?
Shalt thou too mix thy tears with nations rude?
That croud of Gods whom Egypt's ſons ador'd,
Shall not ſuffice thee: new muſt be implor'd,
Whom thou'lt with immortality endow;
Beneath a heavy heaven ſhall Atlas bow.
Nymphs, fawns, and ſilvan deities abound,
To people, mountains, woods and waves around.
Each tree ſhall have its own: the Romans too
Of vanquiſh'd maſters ſhall their ſlaves renew,
Shall laviſh without end celeſtial reign
On emp'rors, fav'rites; an eternal train.
Nay by the ſenate's uncontroul'd decree
Antinous' ſelf the bleſt abodes ſhall ſee!
Deteſted wretches ſhall be ſu'd for nods,
And men become leſs common than the Gods.

How great thy glory, Earth, what days of light,
The godhead ſo familiar to thy ſight!
Seek we, with pence in hand, its altars then:
Its anſwer's ready to the leaſt of men.
In Delphos, and in Delos it abides:
In Afric's ſands it every hour decides.
Or to Dodona let us hy like ſome,
And from a prophet oak learn things to come.
What boots to aſk them, if none can explain?
Or what to know them, if to ſhun is vain?
Of ills we fear, why make a certain ſcope?
Uncertainty at leaſt indulges hope.
It matters not: the fate the heavens prepare
To our impatience they muſt needs declare;
And if a bulloc's heart this ſkill deny,
To flight of birds as rapidly we fly.
Athenian wiſdom! Roman gravity!
O madding reaſon of humanity!
When God no more enlights, where doſt thou ſtray?

To humble Hebrews God vouchſafes his ray:
From gen'ral wreck this ſingle corner's free:
'Twas God who ſaid, this corner ſav'd ſhall be.
The elements inverted own his voice;
Obedient Nature quits thoſe laws by choice,

Which

Which on the world's firſt day her author gave,
But which his ſov'rain will at will can wave.
That honeſt people ſtill with wonders fraught,
The num'rous wonders Heaven for it has wrought,
In ſolemn feaſts their memory retains :
I too could trace the ſtory in my ſtrains.
There you ſhould ſee the ſea her jaws divide,
The rocks relenting into rivers glide,
The frighted floods remounting to their ſource,
And day's bright ſtar arreſted in his courſe.
But ſtruck at once with glory and ſurpriſe,
Which holy prophets dart before my eyes ;
Where miracles ſurrounding ceaſe t' appal,
I will not ſtay but at the firſt of all.

When Heaven to length of days and reſt profound,
Where fertile fields and fruitful flocks abound,
Appear'd t' exalt the higheſt human hopes ;
We ſee ambitious of far nobler ſcopes
Men full of God, by whom they are inſpir'd,
Wand'ring in ſkinny coats, from towns retir'd.
Yet theſe ſometimes they ſeek, to find a tomb,
And ſtern denounce th' impending dreadful doom:
To daunted kings they dain t' addreſs their theme,
As ſent from him of ſov'rains the ſupreme :
Expell'd ſad objects of reproach and hate,
Expos'd to all that men call wretched fate ;

By engines tortur'd, overwhelm'd with chains,
In dungeons buried, where thick darkneſs reigns;
Contented all and more to undergo,
To glut their ardor with the bread of wo.
Of ſuch exalted mortals land indign!
They oft repeat that God *ſhall ſpurn his vine*;
That a new earth ſhall feel, new heav'n ſhall ſee
The wolf and lamb in ſportive harmony:
That *God no longer pleas'd with bullocs' gore,*
Commanding ſuch poor ſacrifice no more,
Th' immac'late hoſt ſhall every-where behold,
And teeming earth her precious bud unfold.
Of Zion's holy one, whom iles attend,
Already all around the rays reſplend.
His matchleſs glories now eclipſe the day,
When by another object call'd away,
The holy one their eyes no more confeſs,
His form and luſtre loſt in his diſtreſs.
By heaven afflicted, and forlorn of friends
Beneath the load of human crimes he bends:
Unſolac'd, undeſir'd, unrev'renc'd then
The man of ſorrows, and the laſt of men;
With miſcreants bound, of criminals as head,
And like a peaceful lamb to ſlaughter led.
Who elſe but God, who times and ſeaſons ſhows,
Could to their eyes thoſe diff'rent ſcenes diſcloſe?

With

With hopes of a redouted lord we're aw'd,
The wondrous prince of peace, the mighty God!
Lo! ſuppliant kings ſurround his ſacred ſeat,
His vanquiſh'd foes ly trembling at his feet:
His reign o'er generations ſhall extend.
But now that glory's gone, that knew no end.
See *full of wounds*, the bliſsful ſcene revers'd,
The dying ſhepherd of a flock diſpers'd!
Beholding him their cruel hands have bor'd,
A people's ſtruck into a ſtate deplor'd.
Far fewer tears bewail an onely ſon:
They beat their breaſts, the nation is undone.
Him whom the royal ſeer confeſs'd afar,
Sprung from the father ere the morning-ſtar,
More wiſe, more bleſt, more great than Solomon;
In horrid torments he deplores anon.
Thou wondrous captive of proud Babel's lord,
Thy God a contraſt calls thee to record.
To his bleſt ſon exalted to his throne,
He gives unbounded ſway, to him alone.
But now appears a widely diff'ring ſcene:
That bleſſed ſon a ſacrifice is ſeen!
The Chriſt is ſlain, the holy place forlorn:
The prieſt lies rolling with his garments torn.
Wreck ſwallows all; the ſacred altar falls:
The temple totters on its trembling walls.

The ſelf-ſame captive ſees the conqu'rors paſs
Their round in gold, in ſilver, iron and braſs;
Beholds their haughty empires born and dy;
Sees Babylon beneath the Perſian ly.
Great Alexander lays the victors low:
Rome humbles Greece, and beats the Perſian foe.
All human pow'r ſhall bend beneath her yoke,
The bruiſing hammer ſhall itſelf be broke;
And from her ruins petty pow'rs ſhall riſe,
In one no more to dare the rival'd ſkies.

'Tis not enough theſe marvels to unfold,
Which ſeers unnumber'd in their ſongs foretold.
All teems with God's deſign, ſo great, ſo rare,
Himſelf appears by models to prepare.
By images he ſhows it every hour,
And plans his work in firſt eſſays of pow'r.
To fatal pile, he ſays, let tenderſt hand
Conduct the ſon who waits the ſire's command;
There let the willing ſacrifice be bound
By no leſs willing prieſt no leſs renown'd,
In act to immolate as unappall'd,
As fond to hold his hand when angel call'd.
Let the beloved ſon, to ſlavery ſold,
Emerge from pit to glory and to gold,
By forain cities fear'd, belov'd, ador'd;
At length by traitor brethren too explor'd.

Let

Let a lamb's blood inſpire with holy aw
Th' exterminating angel to withdraw:
Of all the guilty houſes doom'd to fall,
Be no one ſpar'd without a ſprinkled wall.
A lifeleſs ſign ſhall animation give:
By one bleſt glance the dying eye ſhall live.
That rueful day on which the high-prieſt dies,
To all the wretches whom his death denies
In ſad captivity a ſacred place,
Shall prove at once a day of joy and grace.
One righteous man committed to the wave
By guilty men, themſelves from wreck ſhall ſave.
Three death-long days he fills the monſter's maw,
At length diſgorg'd from the devouring jaw.
All, all declares to me what heaven decrees;
A prophet people guides me by degrees.
With ceaſeleſs ſteps I reach the wiſh'd-for goal,
Where God ſo oft prefigur'd glads my ſoul;
Where of his reign he'll fix th' eternal ſway:
Haſte, haſte, my Muſe, to hail the happy day.

RELIGION.

CANTO IV.

THE cruſh of empires, and the fall of thrones,
The ſcatter'd nations, and the fields of bones;
Thoſe great reverſes, which the common ſort
Think they may juſtly name blind fortune's ſport,
Are ſports of Him, who, maſter of our will,
Can bid our furies his beheſts fulfil,
And turn our paſſions which way e'er they ſtray,
His perfect plan to honor and obey.
For what have conqu'rors by ambition done,
But made the progreſs of Religion run?
Our hates, our wars, her glory have renew'd:
To tell her ſtory, is to make it good.

I know that fiction is a fertile field:
I know the charms luxuriant verſes yield.
By lies we live: the fruit of all our pains
Is but the art where falſehood entertains:

My Muſe devoted to a theme divine,
By ſuch vain ornaments ſhall never ſhine.
Be Sannaſar's th' unenvi'd impious pride ;
But far from me the arts my vows deride.
Simplicity is my recital's ſoul :
'Tis marvel all, and yet 'tis truth the whole.

The God whoſe lore both peace and war fulfil,
From height of heaven can change the earth at will.
Ere yet Religion's venerable ty
Has made the nations join'd one great ally ;
He bids wide univerſe one empire be.
Ambitious Rome long time had will'd as he ;
A prey to faction now the vaſt domain
Becomes confuſion's and diviſion's reign.
He bids united earth one law reſpect,
A peaceful commerce all around protect
His miniſters divine of new commands,
To bear them freely to remoteſt lands.
If now the world one ſov'rain lord confeſs,
So God has will'd it : if a Ceſar preſs,
The great oppreſſor while the world admires,
The Roman freedom with his foe expires.
In her bold ſhips a fair to empire born
Collects the madding nations of the morn.
Enfuriate flies the queen : all with her flies,
Her ſhameful lover follows her, and dies.

And now by great Auguſtus drawn from far,
To Rome the tribes enchain'd attend his car:
The wand'ring Arab, and the burning Moor,
And fartheſt habitant of frigid ſhore;
In ſolemn ranks extend the victor's train:
The Parthian takes th' alarm, and brings again
With ſuppliant hand the enſigns Craſſus loſt:
In vain the Rhetes are in their Alps emboſs'd.
The thunder now on them and all is broke:
A bridge becomes the proud Araxes' yoke.
Behold Euphrates more ſubmiſsly roll,
And branching Rine that ſeeks the other pole.
Auguſtus, peaceful lord of ſea and land,
To ſhut war's temple gives the bleſt command:
That temple where a hundred braſen bolts
Chain Diſcord down, the parent of revolts.
On ſwords and lances laid, forlorn and wild,
She wails her plots deſtroy'd, her rage beguil'd.
To bounteous Earth's ſo long disfigur'd face
The lab'ring hind reſtores her native grace;
The merchant haſtes no more the port to gain,
But bids his veſſels fly along the peaceful main.

The bards tranſported with the glorious ſight,
Entranc'd at once in rapture and delight,
Announce to Rome that all thoſe ſigns unfold
The time's approach her oracles foretold.

An

An age, they ſing, *now rebegins its reign*,
Which is to bring the age of gold again.
Deſcending ſee from heaven a heavenly race;
Lo! Earth now reaſſumes a fairer face:
All ſhall be pure, and every guilty dy,
If any yet remain, for ever fly.

Theſe high predictions give the ears to ring,
And make men hope a new and wondrous thing.
Now tow'rds the Eaſt each turns his wiſhful eyes,
Thence to behold the conqu'ring king ariſe;
Who ſpringing from the climes whence ſprings the day,
Shall earth ſubject to his auſpicious ſway.
Fair Salem rouſes at the pleaſing noiſe:
Old Jacob's heir ſeeks th' authors of his joys.
Devouring keen each holy prophet's page,
He eaſily deſcries the happy age,
Of which their pens ſo nobly could deſcribe
The glorious days to each delighted tribe.
" Accompliſh'd is at length th' appointed ſum:
" The happy time, our father's hope, is come,
" In which *the ſpear* no longer us'd to wound,
" *Becomes a ſhare, to cultivate the ground.*
" Lo! Truth and Mercy bleſs each other's face;
" See Peace and Juſtice in a fond embrace!

" Now gleam no more the ſwords of jealous pow'rs:
" The happineſs of man announces ours.
" What tho' to forain yoke we humbly yield,
" *Tho' Judah's hand no more a ſceptre wield*;
" Our very ſhame declares our glory ſure:
" For fail what will, the words of Heaven endure."

But lo! effulges to the people appall'd
A man (if by the name he may be call'd)
From an obſcure receſs diffuſing aw,
And giving, as her Lord, to Nature law.
The opening eyes confeſs his heavenly voice;
And dazzled with the long-wiſh'd ſun rejoice.
With one bleſt word he overthrows the mound,
Which made the ear deny acceſs to ſound.
And now the happy tongue from fetters free,
In ſongs of praiſe attunes her liberty.
The wretches impotent of foot and hand,
Can dance and play at his divine command.
The dying riſes from his bed and runs,
To ſtem the briny tide of mourning ſons.
Death can no longer boaſt a certain prey;
From his relentleſs jaws now ſnatch'd away,
A brother rous'd attends the mighty call,
At once to glad a ſiſter and appal.
He bids no flood toward its ſource rebound:
He makes no orb depart its daily round.

To

To ſhew a ſign in heaven they vainly teaſe:
He came not down a curious race to pleaſe.
What glorious things he does, on us he ſhows:
On our account his healing virtue flows.
He cures our ails, he calls us back to day;
And ſtill we ſee his pow'r his love diſplay.
But 'tis not all t' enchant the wond'ring eyes:
He ſpeaks; his words the raviſh'd ears ſurpriſe.
What dreadful dooms are by his mouth foretold!
What lofty ſecrets do his lips unfold!
He onely is unmov'd at what he tells,
And on eternal glory coolly dwells;
Where he appears for ever to have dwelt,
The love of human glory quite unfelt.
What tho' a people gaze intent to hear,
Nay, grown ſo keen prevent the ſacred ſeer;
Tho' fond to pleaſe, yet fearleſs to offend,
He never mitigates, whate'er attend,
His doctrines rig'rous to the leaſt of crimes,
His truths ungrateful to licentious times.
Their murmur's vain: they muſt believe, obey:
Indifferent he ſees them ſlink away.

Of ſuch a law-giver what fate ſhall be?
A Virtue's fate a Plato could foreſee.
Her hero muſt, he ſaid, expect the worſt;
The rage of miſcreants on his head to burſt.

If he appear on earth, he's rais'd on high,
Expanded bloody *on a croſs* to dy.
Bleſt peace of mind, ſweet pledge of innocence,
Thou at his death ſhalt prove his ſole defence.
The oracle's fulfill'd: the Righteous dies.
All nature's mov'd: the news momentous flies.
From mourning Jordan's deſolated mounds,
To Tiber's ſhores the doleful tale reſounds.
To ſpread it wider fearleſs mortals fly,
The world to fill, prepar'd to live or dy.

Repent and mourn; aſcend his croſs ſublime:
The victim expiates, whate'er the crime.
Ye all have taken what ye cannot give,
The life of him who gave you all to live.
He whom he ſaw with ſpite, and hail'd with ſcorn,
Is glory's king, tho' here his crown was thorn.
He whom with cords your barb'rous butchers bound,
Op'd every vein to cloſe your every wound;
He whom they dragg'd to death like wretch abhorr'd,
Is th' image, brightneſs, offspring of the Lord.
That God who ſaid, *Be light, and it was ſo,*
Lay darkly dormant in the grave below.
But death is vanquiſh'd: hell bereft is broke.
All nature trembled, when her God awoke.
He lives: our eyes confeſs'd. Believe. O ſtrange!
They've but to bid belief. Hail happy change!

In

In words, in writings plain, they're never found
By pomp to dazzle, or deceive by ſound.
They own their errors, nor conceal their ſhame,
Recount their failings, firſt themſelves to blame.
From their own mouths I learn their humble birth,
Which undeſigningly exalts their worth:
From them their infidelity I hear,
Their maſter's trouble and his human fear.
At ſight of death he ſaddens and he ſhakes;
Him languid, low, his fortitude forſakes.
And that ſame bitter cup he has to prove,
Far from him, if he could, he would remove.
Do heroes thus indulge weak Nature's moan?
A Socrates could cruſh her ſmalleſt groan.
Impoſture, ſkill'd in what will moſt prevail,
With charms more pow'rful had adorn'd her tale.

Their writings, will you ſay, bereft of art,
Leave no ſuſpicion of their honeſt heart;
But honeſt minds, moſt open to ſurpriſe,
Perhaps have firſt believ'd the groſſeſt lies.
If falſe their facts, record them how could they,
Amidſt their foes ſo ready to gainſay?
Scarce did their Lord from mortal eyes withdraw,
When him in every place a people ſaw.

How juſtly then that hiſt'ry we revere,
Which witneſſes offended ſilent hear!

But lo! my eyes deſcry thee in deſpair,
Heav'n-favor'd people, city once ſo fair!
What haſt thou done? Thy God declares thy fate:
Can ſo much love engender ſo much hate?
Each day 'tis heavier than the former ſaw,
And thou wert ne'er more zealous for his law.
What hideous harbingers announce thy fall!
Thee foreign and domeſtic wars appal,
With conflagrations, plague and famine curſt.
What woes collected! now the tempeſts burſt:
The clouds collide, the ſwift-wing'd lightning flies:
Jerus'lem is no more; the temple lies.
"Not I," ſaid Titus, "have theſe laurels won;
"It is not I, their God has them undone.
"Heaven doutleſs puniſhes a guilty land:
"And to its vengeance I've but lent my hand."
How juſt on them this chaſtiſement redounds!
Their victim's blood upon themſelves rebounds.
The ſire no more his rebel ſons avows:
The lord provok'd has lopt the faithleſs boughs.
Nor has he quite torn up th' ungrateful tree,
Its luſtre loſt by a new prodigy.
What grafted branches on th' aſtoniſh'd root
Tho' wildings erſt, become the native fruit!

What do I ſee? an alien ſpoil the heir!
And ſhall th' adopted ſon have eldeſt ſhare?

How teems the parent of the new-born race!
Earth has but ſeen them, and they fill her face.
The lords of regions water'd by the Nile
Of ancient wiſdom own at length the guile.
T' embrace the folly of the croſs they vow,
A tranſverſe timber makes the Parthian bow:
And reunited for the glorious cauſe,
The Scythians vagabond acknowlege laws:
To th' author of the ſun the Perſian bends,
Nor longer to the work his homage lends.
Of Lybian waſtes th' uncultivated child,
Th' indocil Sarmat, and the Arab wild,
Their ſavage manners haſte to humaniſe:
Fam'd Corinth rouſes, and her ſoftneſs flies.
Learn'd Athens opes her eyes: I hear her own
The pow'r of him ſhe long ador'd unknown.
Now better taught, that altar ſhe reveres,
Aſcends no more to him ſhe blindly fears.
That God whom Plato ſought ſo long, is found:
Sage Mars' hill's ſummits his great name reſound.
The Gauls deteſt the honors paid with life,
To bloody gods by barb'rous druid's knife:
They learn that Heaven leſs rig'rous in its ire,
A wretch's blood of man did ne'er require.

And own a broken heart's remorſe of vice
A holy God's moſt holy ſacrifice.
Thy glorious martyrs were thy firſt of gains,
Thou ſeat of wealth, thou glory of the plains,
Where ſlowly-winding Sone inſpires the ſong,
Till born reluctant by the Rone along.
Thou whom the Seine ſalutes in all her charms,
Who ſoon enfold'ſt her in thy ſpreading arms;
O city bleſt, thee infant faith enlights:
Thy kings ſhall glory to exalt her rights.
On your heads alſo beams that ſtar divine,
O ye whom lave the Danube and the Rine;
Ye who quaff Tagus, or Iberus bright;
Ye who in foreſts loſt ne'er ſaw the light:
And you whom ſever'd from the common ſtage
The ſeas had ſhelter'd from the Roman rage;
Sites which their boldeſt eagle never ſaw,
I ſee victorious Faith your climates aw.
To the great name which o'er the world extends,
From Indus to the Thames all nature bends.
The croſs has conquer'd all, *Eccleſia* cries,
What num'rous children bleſs a mother's eyes!

On Tiber's banks peculiar glories ſhine:
There ſprings the greatneſs of her reign divine.
In Rome behold, and in her ſiſter ſees
Such thrones ariſe as make ambition freeze!

Behold

Behold their ſteps imbru'd, their monarchs ſlain!
There none aſcended but to fall again.
In times when Faith could but to ſlaughters lead,
The glorious firſt-fruits of a flock to bleed,
The paſtors vied but for the greateſt pain:
Such their firſt honor, ſuch their higheſt gain.

What horrid ſcene indeed offends my eyes!
What unknown torments fury can deviſe?
The burning lights as living flambows burn,
And mangled piece-meal into tatters turn:
In barb'rous ſhows, on ſlaughter's bloody ſtage
They meet the lion's, or the tiger's rage.
What flames! what croſſes! ah, what ſcaffolds toil!
The ſlayers can no more: the ſwords recoil.
The juſteſt prince to them alone unjuſt,
Beſtows their blood to pleaſe his people's guſt.
The emp'rors all in this alone agree:
To them a Trajan will a Nero be.
Alike the preſent, paſt, and future time:
Their name is Chriſtian, and their name the crime.
In queſt of death their genius they employ:
Protracted tortures but prolong their joy.
They count each tyrant kind, they court each frown,
And bleſs the hand that beats their priſon down.
To hate life thus what ardor can enflame?
The empty luſt to eterniſe a name.

In

I own this madneſs may ſometimes beguile :
When Peregrine aſcending erſt a pile,
To dy with flaſh his vital fetters broke ;
The haughty cynic vaniſh'd into ſmoke.
But what of women, or of babes d'ye ſay,
Whom Romans ſacrifice, whom Perſians ſlay ;
Of men, whoſe names we no where can deſcry?
To live in ſtory did they ſeek to dy ?

Their blindneſs muſt, you'll ſay, our pity move:
Error her martyrs can as Truth approve.
The Bonze preſents a barren ſacrifice,
A mangled body by a wild caprice.
Mad victim, which an ancient rigor fames !
Th' unſhrinking widow ſprings into the flames,
To join a ſpouſe perhaps with hate ſhe ſaw ;
In certain climes 'tis ſtill a ſtanding law :
Law worthy of our tears, abhorr'd abuſe!
What woes alas ! Religion muſt produce !

Revere we men whom God himſelf allows.
Yes, whom with choiceſt gifts kind Heaven endows.
And Heaven the falſe ne'er favor'd. They expel
The ſpirit of fell hate, the ſpawn of hell.
Th' infernal tyrant, ſtudious to deſtroy,
Our ſorrows gone, has loſt his higheſt joy ;

At

At Chriſtian voice abandoning his prey,
From frames he tortur'd flies amaz'd away.
The prince of falſehood boaſts no more his throne,
His uſurpation dire at length o'erthrown.

No pains it coſt him, and no fame accru'd,
When man by wild credulity ſubdu'd,
Art needing not to dazzle reaſon's eyes,
Without ſuſpicion yielded to ſurpriſe.
Thoſe days were paſt: fam'd Grecia firſt, they ſay,
At leaſt had open'd to the light a way.
T' inveſtigate the light a Plato born,
Made men their errors ſee, and ſeen to ſcorn.
Big with his lectures, ancient ſchools of fame
Enlight the darkling world with Plato's name:
The ſolemn ſage is all around rever'd,
At court even honor'd, and in ſenate fear'd.
His weight may bear us down: but vainly vy
In hate a Celſus and a Porphyry.
For what avail them their injurious jokes?
To hurt us would require more ſerious ſtrokes,
To blaſt the facts that freſh in mem'ry blow,
And on her grounds our fabric to o'erthrow.
He who can only fleer, declines to fight,
And conſcious of the wrong, redouts the right.
The Chriſtians are arrain'd as foes of ſtate;
And charg'd with deeds their ſtanding tenets hate.

Of

Of guilt thoſe innocents are doom'd the friends,
Whoſe heaven-born doctrine onely heav'n-ward tends.
Pure as their morals, pure their every law,
From them we learn to ſee a king with aw;
We learn to rev'rence even a Nero's rod.
" *All pow'r*, they tell us, *muſt deſcend from God.*
" The prince his image, and the lord of men,
" Holds from the lord of heaven his ſceptre then.
" Obey, ye ſubjects, in the hardeſt time:
" The ſmalleſt murmur is a hainous crime."
In vain againſt a cruel, legal pow'r,
Revolted nations arm in luckleſs hour:
Whate'er the preſſure, or whate'er the pain:
To Ceſar true the Chriſtians will remain.

But is it weakneſs makes them tamely yield,
My wonder doubles when their pow'r's reveal'd.
Obedient nature hears their awful ſound.
What num'rous marvels meet my eyes around!
The falling eye-lid riſes to the ray:
The dying and the dead return to day.
Of panting camps beneath a parching ſun,
The thunder pours its ſwift-wing'd death on one;
And while the German flies the firy flakes,
A ſalutary flood the Roman ſlakes.
The fainting ſoldier, in a kindly ſhow'r
Finds victory at once and vital pow'r.

The grateful prince his benefactors fames ;
Yet theſe the perverſe mob *enchanters* names :
Enchantment bleſt, which bids the thunder roll !
From heaven deſcend the charms that earth controul.

But lo ! her horror turns her honor now,
The croſs adorns the high imperial brow ;
And victory transferr'd exalts the ſign,
The glorious banner of a Conſtantine.
In fanes forlorn the ſpeechleſs prieſt unaw'd
Spurns the vile cenſer of his falling God ;
Forſakes an altar where no off'ring's paid :
Even Delphos aſk'd can yield no longer aid,
So ready erſt to anſwer ev'ry ſuit :
Apollo ſilenc'd, ev'ry god is mute.
To martyrs' tombs, which marvels magnify,
For oracles the prince and people hy.
A mortal maſſacred becomes implor'd,
Deſtroy'd the deities ſo late ador'd.

Rome long oppoſes this o'erpow'ring flood,
And vindicates her Jove with chriſtian blood.
But ah ! no more unmindful of their cries,
T' avenge thy children, mighty God, ariſe.
Long, long enough the ſhouts of idol rage
Have rung unquell'd upon her bloody ſtage.

Thou ſummon'ſt her account, decree'ſt her fate :
O God of victors, thine avengers wait.
Rome doom'd to fall, attends the final knell ;
As haughty Babylon, and thy falſe city fell.

Yes, 'tis that God, to whom pertains the praiſe,
To make blind mortals tread his wondrous ways.
Beneath proud conquerors when cities fall,
When the dire cruſh of empires ſhakes the ball ;
When wild Ambition ſets the world on fire ;
What are the heroes darkling men admire,
But miniſters of an avenging God ?
A tool to puniſh, or to ſcourge a rod ?
What means the horrid Hun ! what ſeeks the Goth ?
Where roves the Vandal ? why's the Herule wroth ?
For him they roam, unconſcious of controul,
Who calls them circling from their native pole.
Before their hoſts he bids pale Terror go :
Rome falls the victim of the barb'rous foe.
But from her aſhes a new Rome aſcends !
Which, tho' unlike the old, for gen'ral ſway contends.

While bleſt Religion ſuch ſucceſſes crown,
Durſt I to trace her rapid progreſs down,
To paint each ſov'rain bending low his head,
From triumph in her train to triumph led ;

How

How wide the field, how fine the tale would be!
But needleſs tale to who has eyes to ſee.
The tree o'erſpreads the earth, its boughs extend,
Where'er the ſun's diffuſive beams reſplend.
From riſing dawn to the deſcending ray,
To him whoſe croſs drew all, all homage pay.
But when that God vouchſaf'd with man to dwell,
Could I have better known him, who can tell?
Had it been mine enraptur'd to have hung
On the ſweet accents of his heavenly tongue,
From Jordan's banks, to Tabor's lofty brow:
No, no: his glory's more refulgent now.

Behold a Moſes and Elias by!
Each bard declares, the law proclaims him nigh.
At length th' Apoſtles arms of ſleep forſake.
What clouds of witneſſes with them awake!
By dying for him they their homage give:
They all are martyr'd, that their faith may live.
I ſee him: 'tis himſelf, I cannot dout:
To ſee is little, let us hear him out:
The voice of all the blood that flow'd from love,
Repeats the voice reſounding from above,
When Tabor ſhone with a celeſtial ray.
Yes, *'tis the ſon belov'd*; let all believe, obey.

But hah! "he lays a yoke too hard," I hear;
"His doctrine's dark, his morals are severe:
"Nor head nor heart can bear the grievous thrall."
I rouse transported at the daring call:
I will th' injustice of such plaints repel,
And trace their sources to their native hell;
Pursue the deist in his winding ways:
What nobler theme, or worthier of my lays?

RELIGION.

CANTO V.

THE Word alike to God, the Light of Light,
Ere duſt-ſprung mortals leaving native night
Had bleſt the genial beam, or hail'd the morn,
Before the earth, nay ere the heavens were born,
Eternal pow'r and ſov'rain wiſdom aw'd:
The Word in God, the ſon of God, was God.

The ſon of God and ſon of man! ſay, how
Can he ſtill equal——But I pauſe and bow.
O Reaſon, bold and blind, thy pride forego:
Canſt trace the winds? then tell me how they blow.
We feel their pow'r: how loud they roar! we cry,
Free to the ear, impervious to the eye!
Whate'er perplexity my ſoul purſue,
Faith, Heaven's fair daughter, offers to my view.
Propt on an anchor, vail'd her lovely face,
Her flaming heart enlights the hallow'd place.

" Advance,

" Advance, ſhe ſays, by me, and be diſcrete:
" Caſt down thy eyes, my beams ſhall guide thy feet.
" Is this a time to ſee, this gloom of night?
" Patient expect the dawn, attend aright.
" Thou more haſt here t' adore than to diſcern,
" More to believe than know, to love than learn."

What, cries the deiſt, chain our reaſon down!
Heaven's nobleſt gift, and man's ſupreme renown!
Who e'er can think the ſov'rain judge of right
Would quench a flame which once himſelf could light?

He doutleſs lighted it when time began,
And that bright boon illumin'd guiltleſs man;
Now quite eclips'd, if not extinct the whole,
It guides but gloomily the guilty ſoul.
But Faith relumes it with a purer ſpark;
And gloomy mortals dare to find it dark.
When God reveals himſelf, let none conteſt:
He tells enough: let none require the reſt.
Till the ſet day th' important book is ſeal'd.

Ah! from our pride what has he not conceal'd?
His myſteries ſublime can we attain,
When his leaſt ſecrets loſe our ſhallow brain?
Fair Nature flies us, that we may purſue:
And ſtill the book ſeems opening to the view.

What

What ages loſt! nor ought has drawn the mind
To read what there it eaſily might find.
And when our wants, when time, or ſeeming chance
Compel at length to caſt th' attentive glance;
We learn a fact, but do we know the cauſe?
That ſprings to view, but this as quick withdraws.
Thou wondring wiſe-man, bold to trace the plan,
In vain in Nature's womb wouldſt Nature ſcan:
Thou there find'ſt wrote, *No more, intruder, preſs.*
Into my holy none ſhall find acceſs.
Yes, thoſe ſame objects obvious to the eye,
Become inviſible beheld too nigh;
And he whoſe laws a madding main ſubdue,
Of erring mortals bounds th' ambitious view.
They fight to fathom nature, vaineſt things!
Her motions they may ſee, but ne'er her ſprings.
Thro' all ſhe leſſons us, *your Lord adore:*
Admire, enjoy; but think not to explore.
Behold a man with rage of knowlege curſt,
The bands of ignorance indignant burſt:
But has he ſcann'd the whole? for all his pain
To ignorance his learning brings again.
Thy pride, vain mortal, fluſhes to a frown:
Since it would murmur, we muſt beat it down.
Of thy fam'd progreſs let us mount the ſcale,
And of thy mind deduce the humbling tale.

'Twas Int'reſt promis'd firſt the learner's praiſe:
How beſt the flocks to rear, the crops to raiſe,
Bid men be frugal of their fleeting time;
And Need to ſtarry regions taught to climb.
How could we better rule our toils and days,
Than by thoſe orbs ſo reg'lar in their ways?
The wiſe improver of the banks of Nile
Obſerv'd them long beneath a cloudleſs ſmile.
To ken their motions with diſtincter view,
He cantons them apart, and names them too.
Caſſini learn'd, and Galileo ſage,
Forgive your anceſtors, regard their age:
Their eyes inur'd alone to ſilvan ſcenes,
Trac'd in the azure ſky as on their greens,
Dogs, rams, and bulls conſtellated on high;
Which you with nobler names ſhall one day dignify.
Old Saturn and his ſon ſhall boaſt their train;
But with the pow'r of age all pow'r is vain:
Thoſe early names beſtow'd by vulgar hind
Shall print eternal error on the mind.
Thrice happy babe beneath the balance born!
But ah! how dire its cruel neighbor's horn!
A Horace ſhudders, if he knows that chance
Has caſt upon his birth the baleful glance.
The vault of heaven expands the book of fate,
Where many more than Cardan meditate.

Buy we their favor. Richelieu, Mazarin,
One patroniſes, and one pays Morin.
His eyes decypher clear what yours confound:
He makes you tremble; ſpread the terror round.
In dread of endleſs night a people run
To reſcue by their ſhouts the lab'ring ſun.
But hah! what threat'ning body comes t' aſſail
Nature with flowing hair and flaming tail?
What furies flaſh from the tremendous train!
Ignoble herd, diſpel your terrors vain:
Theſe boding delegates of dire portent,
If not for kings, for miniſters are ſent.
The heavens amazing love or leiſure ſhow:
The coward owl ſhall lay our courage low.
O heaven, let not thy luminaries fail!
Shall our ſalt tumble, and not we grow pale?
Chear us, ye ſoothſay'rs, bring your every ſpell,
Your rings, rods, taliſmans, where virtues dwell;
And all the aids which Ignorance reveres,
As wild in what ſhe hopes, as what ſhe fears.

When all the num'rous errors Egypt bred,
To ſeek a kinder clime their parent fled,
In Greece they found it, and a feeble race
In ſweet inebriation's ſoft embrace.
There verſe and muſic, dance and play inſpir'd;
Apelles, Scopas, and a Homer fir'd.

Chain'd to the charming arts, the eyes and ears
No longer ſaw the earth or heard the ſpheres.
With theſe the ſages ſeem'd but ſeldom caught:
With theſe was never ſeiz'd the Romans' thought.
Fir'd with his hero more than nature's themes,
Lucretius ſung an Epicurus' dreams.
They hold deſcanting but a fruitleſs farce:
The art of conqueſt ſuits the ſons of Mars.
For earth's great maſters ſtudy has no charms.
The ſun, they ſaid, reclines in Thetis' arms:
The vault whoſe circle has for baſe the ſea,
O'er earth and air reſplends a canopy;
And ancient Ocean, Nature's ſire alone,
Extends around his ſons his humid zone.
Such was their progreſs, when the rage of fight
Extinguiſh'd every hope of learning's light.

Enfeebled Rome, by vaſtneſs of domain,
Scarce o'er the earth extended yet her chain.
Increaſing ſlaves o'erpower'd th' unwieldy ſway,
Which ſpite of double prop, muſt now give way.
When all the unreſiſted Herule own,
Auguſtulus muſt yield Auguſtus' throne.
Trembling a Conſtantine's confeſs'd the fall,
As the dire prelude to the cruſh of all.
The fam'd impoſtor in a fatal hour
With Saracens commenc'd a baleful pow'r,

Which by another name more dreadful tow'r'd,
Beneath the ſpawn the fenny Euxine pour'd;
The day the ſecond Mahomet, the day
The creſcent's glory and the world's diſmay
Level'd at length Byzantium with the plain,
And clos'd a Trapezund's poor paſſing reign.

Be all our palaces in aſhes laid:
When nothing tow'rs, of what art thou afraid?
Ah! why the writings we in vain deſire,
Why, ruthleſs victor, muſt they feed the fire?
Bland Ignorance on all thy wiſhes ſmiles,
And Dulneſs hails thee monarch of the iles.
Their empire crowning thine needs no defence,
Since a groſs learning foe to common ſenſe
Darkening the maſter of the dark by rule,
Forms all thoſe famous doctors in his ſchool,
Who arm'd with all the category's pride
The concrete from the abſtract dare divide.
Haſte, injur'd Reaſon, thine avenger ſend:
Let Dulneſs' ſons to thee no more pretend.

While pompous words enchain th'admiring throng,
And nature mourns without beholders long;
Fell Int'reſt to her face allur'd our eyes:
A Genoeſe informs us, what ſurpriſe!

That a new world is ſeen beyond the old,
A world whoſe habitant forſakes its gold.
We fly. Whate'er th' inſpiring object found,
O'er wat'ry mountains which way do we bound?
Long fix'd upon its leaf by ſuch a bar,
By what effort has th' inſect crawl'd ſo far?

A magnet (chance ſuſpended in the air)
Fix'd on its pole, as lovers on the fair,
Reveal'd that paſſion none can yet explain:
To us what bleſſing, tho' the Yncaes' bane!
Our foreſts wave the main, their wings unfurl'd:
The compaſs makes us den'ſons of the world.
It opens us the ports of either Ind:
It wafts us home their ſtores in every kind.
Such various objects, plants and fruits and flow'rs,
(How ſlow the progreſs of the human pow'rs!)
Rouſe curious eyes, too long in ſlumbers bound,
And earth revives the lore of worlds around.

Of vitrifying ſand, where aſhes glow,
Two mediums bright (theſe too to chance we ow)
Far each from each, and each to each oppos'd,
At a tube's either end by boys diſpos'd,
Make raviſh'd Zealand cry, what wonder found!
The famous Tuſcan rouſes at the ſound.

With

With better eyes he ſpurns a Ptol'my's yoke,
His cryſtals, circles and his heavens are broke.
All's chang'd: by Galileo's bold decree
Far from the center Earth muſt baniſh'd be.
For radiant reſt the Sun commutes his way,
Center of Univerſe, calm king of day,
To ſee the Heavens, and Earth itſelf go round,
The ſeeming blaſphemies the ears confound.
Six years of durance, and 'tis all a dream,
Recants the martyr of the dreadful ſcheme;
While circling Earth regardleſs of the throng,
Rolls Galileo and his judge along.

What num'rous habitants of regions new
Thy ken, great Réaumur, draws forth to view!
Unſeen, unheard why would a people ly,
And hide ſuch glory from the keeneſt eye?
The ſuttle fugitives were ſtill unknowne
Had we not other eyes to aid our own,
For he that gave the guides of erring man,
Afforded none his every work to ſcan.
And when our feeble glance would pierce the clouds,
In which his depths the jealous God enſhrouds.
To ken ſo far what optics muſt be found?
Ye worms of earth, to earth your boldneſs bound.

Scarce

Scarce had her beauty now no more unknown
To raviſh'd eyes increaſing wonders ſhown,
When curious lore inſpir'd in all around
The happy hate of quiddities profound;
And now the Stagyrite expell'd the ſtage,
Of roaring ſchools no more enflam'd the rage.
Vain metaphyſics baniſh'd with their lord,
Abundant Nature ſtill a void abhorr'd.
But let approaching day our ſpirits chear:
We all ſhall think; behold Deſcartes appear.

He lives obſcure; but wide his labors blaze;
Which form his followers, and his rivals raiſe.
Of him they hold whatever arms they wield;
To him they ow their glory in the field:
Be his aſcrib'd whatever conqueſts be:
To him his victors ow their victory.
Beyond his bounds tho' now we proudly ſtalk,
Nay run, yet without him we ſhould not walk.
Had ne'er this light illum'd the Gallic coaſt,
Proud London would not now her Newton boaſt.

Both beaming glories of the human mind,
In both her greatneſs which they teach, we find.
But ſoon as either would procede too far,
In each the human mind perceives her bar.

Deſcartes

Deſcartes firſt guides me with intrepid hand,
Where infant worlds confeſs divine command.
There from a cubic maſs, where nature lies,
Three elements of various form ariſe:
There angles grown by joint attrition dull,
Where the great Mover moving all in full,
For the firſt time makes plaſtic matter ply,
Into refin'd and bright effluvia fly.
Theſe Newton ſees not; or, Deſcartes deſtroy'd,
Sees bodies moving in a boundleſs void;
Each act on each by one converſive law,
And each to each with one attraction draw:
While in one inſtant, by one common fate,
To common center all congravitate.
But 'mongſt th' unequal volumes who ſhall tow'r
To ſing the combats of the central pow'r?
When daring Algebra the chaos clears,
Her hero briſtles, and ſubjects the ſpheres.

Ye whom th' almighty architect of all
Appointed to enlight the darkling ball,
From toils which I pretend not to partake,
Might I withdraw you, one demand to make;
Say what attraction brings to earth again
That body I ſo high have hurl'd in vain;
Weight--How that word confounds the cleareſt mind!
Yet ſay at leaſt within you what you find.

After a meal, within your breaſt ſerene,
What wondrous will renews the war unſeen?
And what bleſt pow'r victorious for our good,
Can ſeek, ſubdue, and triturate the food;
Which ſoon a juice from vein to vein ſhall ſtray,
And join the blood that bears the juice away.
Or in another no leſs precious ſtrife,
How can a bark to chear the wretch's life,
Attack, o'erpower, and then enchain the foe,
Who high in fury, or in ſlumbers low,
Now ſtarves with cold, and now with fever burns,
This day leaves peace, and that with war returns.
The truce expir'd, as reg'lar in her ire,
She kindles in our eyes a ſparkling fire.
Then all our ſuttle ſpirits, troubled, toſt,
Err in their courſe; the very ſoul is loſt:
And Death in act to ſtrike, his thunder wields.
What peace to pains a grain of powder yields!

With learned ſyſtems then no more affright,
And flaſhy ſpeeches which can ne'er enlight.
Of real knowlege boaſt no beamy ſpark:
Own all within you to yourſelf is dark.
And yet we would, to ſubjects blind as bold,
The world's great lord his counſels ſhould unfold,
When this our frame, vile ſubject of the ſoul,
Denies its ſecrets to its queen's controul!

If I extinguiſh bleſt Religion's light,
I pour before my eyes another night.
How dark to thee, poor deiſt, grows the gloom!
Thou bury'ſt nature in a double tomb.
To thine eyes as to mine can ſhe diſplay
Him, who exiles me for a moment's ſtay?
If earth is not the vengeance of an hour,
Canſt there admire the great Creator's pow'r?
Fell peſt'lence ravages, and earthquakes dire
Precede the fury of inteſtine fire:
Her the cold pinches, or the heat devours;
To crown her woes, her very king deflow'rs.
The thinking being, who ſhould govern all,
Roams blind and pow'rleſs o'er the waſted ball;
And hapleſs ſlave of rebel paſſions' ſway,
Is but a king whoſe ſubjects ſcorn t' obey:
His day of death becomes his day of peace.
His realm, thou know'ſt, attends a like deceaſe.
Yes, all ſhall periſh, all by fire diſſolve,
Thou long haſt known; but canſt the problem ſolve,
Why e'er a God deſtroys what once he wrought?
Or why not all to full perfection brought?
Him, if he could not, who can then admire?
Or if he would not, how ſhouldſt thou deſire?
Thou ſtriv'ſt in vain, who think'ſt to ſee the whole,
To force the curtain, which diſtracts thy ſoul.

For me, I wait till God himſelf ſhall draw;
Now Faith ſuſtains it, and I glimpſe with aw.
Enough I ſee: take here her leſſon kind,
Thy heart to ſolace, and to ſooth thy mind.

Yes, all muſt ſpeak his praiſe, perform his plan,
Whoſe temple's univerſe, whoſe prieſt is man.
By voice of man its gratitude muſt tow'r;
The fane could but reſound its maker's pow'r.
Nor founded long; the prieſt forgot his God:
Earth with the criminal partook the rod.
Inverted order own'd the rueful day;
And nature mourn'd her harmony away.
One fate involv'd the ſons of human breath:
Sin was their biaſs, and their end was death.
But thoſe ſons were no more; a future race—
When the Creator ſmites the creature's face,
Is't ours to meaſure, or direct the blow?
What a God ows himſelf, do mortals know?

Earth was no more a paradiſe of joys:
Yet the grim miniſter who laſt deſtroys,
And now ſo keen to execute the law,
Beneath a heaven ſerene, ſtood off with aw.
Alas! his ſlowneſs, ſuch the impious times!
Did but accelerate our ſpeed to crimes.

That

That men no more might on their manſion doat,
Kind heaven a ſecond time their darling ſmote:
Earth by the blow to inmoſt centre torn,
With aſpect ſometimes hideous, ſtill forlorn;
Saw on her blaſted boſom caverns yawn,
Saw ſandy mountains ſwell along the lawn;
And overcaſt her face in gloomy forms,
The noxious vapours, parents of the ſtorms.
Diſorder'd ſeaſons and enfuriate winds
Arm death againſt us in unnumber'd kinds.
Behold all nature, in ſuch ſuffring ſtate,
A captive, groaning her deliv'rance wait;
Yield that ſubjection which ſhe'd fain deny,
Elude our glances, and in ſecret ſigh.
Yes, all is vail'd, till that dread ſhunleſs hour,
When God diſclos'd with unreſiſted pow'r
Shall hurl before him each extinguiſh'd ſtar,
Replace the day, removing every bar,
And, ſev'ring to his ſaints the right from wrong,
Effulge that onely light they wiſh'd ſo long.
For ev'n to holy eyes He here below
Will ſometimes ſhroud himſelf, and ſometimes ſhow;
And thro' th' obſcurity thus dains to guide
The ſouls bewilder'd in the maze of pride.
Why then complain? he may withdraw his light:
But graciouſly he will not cloud it quite.

Who ſeeks that light, its rays illume his mind:
But whoſo ſeeks it not, ſhall never find.
The myſt'ry of our woes I thus admire,
And own an angry lord a tender ſire:
With rigors mix'd his bounties glad my ſight,
With judgements mercies, and with darkneſs light.

If my religion but to error run,
It ſpreads for me a ſnare I cannot ſhun.
What order, ſplendor, and connection ſhine!
What harmony and union of deſign!
What darkneſſes at once are clear to me!
Hiſtorians, martyrs, prophets, types I ſee:
With doctrine reaſon, writ and oral law,
All all agree, to one concluſion draw:
The fair impoſture cannot fail to ſtrike,
To truth itſelf in every point alike.
What wondrous genius, deiſts learn'd, decide,
Knows to involve us thus on every ſide;
That far from wond'ring that involv'd we ſtay,
Yourſelves ſhould bluſh how you could get away?
For tho' your God indiff'rent were to you,
Could he, forgetting far his glory's due,
Permit that Error, which he ſeems to own,
T' abuſe his name, o'er us to rear her throne.

Yet how ſo far from natal place and hour
Has falſehood over all got ſo much pow'r?

From

From Iceland's ile to Java's burning coaſt,
From Mexico if to Japan we roaſt,
From hideous Hottentot if north we go,
To Lapland's frigid ſon involv'd in ſnow,
Our prieſts have fir'd their zeal as with the ſun;
To conquer ſouls from pole to pole have run.
Slaves have their victors hugg'd in every chain.
How bleſt the fiction, thus the heart to gain!

From Ganges' banks to thoſe of Seine or Thames,
If drawn by th' ardor which their ſons enflames,
Sweet ſpeaking Talapoins, with ſermon long
Should pour to preach their Sommonokodong;
Or, preachers who right reaſon leſs withſtand,
Should derviſes, the koran in their hand,
Come thund'ring by the mighty prophet's name,
T' inculcate keen the true believer's claim:
What crop of hearts would crown th' apoſtles' pow'rs?
Yet all their people have accepted ours.
A Deity conceiv'd in virgin's womb,
Poor, pining, dying, dead, but rais'd from tomb,
By them beſpeaks but penitence and tears.
Is it their ſhining ſpeech gives hopes or fears,
That make the poor Chineſe his pagod toſs?
What field for th' orator, the crib and croſs!

He who foretold fulfils the wondrous thing,
With which each people, every land ſhall ring.
His holy law ſhall be proclaim'd around:
I take the glorious yoke with joy profound.
What tho' my Reaſon bends, who lights alone?
She ſees no light repugnant to her own;
But with the torch of Faith her torch combines:
In both to me one lumination ſhines.
Hail Word incarnate! ſtill be thou ador'd!
Thrice holy hail, who haſt my life reſtor'd!

All nought abhorr'd at thy commandment flies;
In thee alone all lives, without thee dies.
O thou, whoſe wiſdom plann'd the gen'ral frame,
Whoſe pow'r perform'd, and goodneſs guides the ſame,
Thee all created beings magnify,
Word, image, equal of the great Moſt High!
When ſhrouded in our ſhape, thou cam'ſt below,
Thee, mighty God, the darkneſs did not know.
Now that thy glory pours reſiſtleſs day,
That thy religion ſheds around its ray;
Proud ſpirits loſt in learn'd ebriety,
Thee beaming on them, ſtill refuſe to ſee.
Their ſtate nor needs ſurpriſe us nor affright:
The darkneſs ne'er ſhall comprehend the light.

The

The blind ſurrounded with the ſtar of day,
Warm'd with his glory ſtill in night muſt ſtray.
In vain the great firſt cauſe the witlings own,
Without Thee, Word eternal, ſtill unknown.
Open their heart, impervious to my lays:
Change it—But when for them I'd pity raiſe,
I have myſelf forgot thy judgement dooms
The ſinner whoſe unhallow'd mouth preſumes
To men without thy call t' announce thy way.
For whom but for myſelf then ſhould I pray?
With a new fury Irreligion rag'd:
The tott'ring ark my trembling hand engag'd.
My zeal to fear, perhaps provokes thine ire,
For thine, and for the glory of thy ſire.
Weak fear, which faith muſt ſoon expel my mind!
Thou need'ſt no champion of the human kind.
Let the proud prince of hell his rage enflame,
Shake, if he can, thine adamantine frame:
Tho' my eyes ſaw its tow'rs in act to nod,
I know that nought ſhall whelm the ark of God.

RELIGION.

CANTO VI.

NO: th' awful gloom the myſteries extend,
Can raiſe no bluſhes for the knee I bend.
From bold diſputing with my Lord I'm aw'd:
Who ſhall inſtruct of God, if 'tis not God?
What tho' in ſable ſhade he's ſhrouded round,
Still there's a beam pervading to the ground.
Undaunted I advance: what need I more?
And with the ray ſuffic'd, the cloud adore.
He bids: I bow. Before her author's throne,
My Reaſon unabaſh'd ſubjects her own.

But ſuch a ſacrifice why can't it ſate?
Why would he too that man himſelf ſhould hate?
Myſelf I love: why play the rig'rous part,
Why ſtill with ſword in hand transfix my heart?
O bloody ſacrifice! O dire diſpute,
T' extirpate quite this love's eternal root!

He

He jealous of the work he meant his own,
Will our ſupportleſs hearts ſupport alone.
Such wondrous jealouſy can I excite?
Me never gold or greatneſs ſhall invite
T' eſtrange the heart he onely can deſerve,
From duty for ſo poor a price to ſwerve:
But for a rapid quaff of pleaſure's bowl,
To ſooth the thirſt of a tormented ſoul,
In breaſt divine can ſo much anger dwell?
And ſhall a drop of honey doom to hell?
An undivided love he muſt demand;
But boaſts not nature too his forming hand?
And when with little joys thou blend'ſt our woes,
From him each gift of thine, O Nature, flows.
Not that from thee I wait my ſolid pride,
Or from thy heroes would I chooſe my guide.
The judge renown'd of eleganter joy
In vain with learned luxury would buoy.
The art of happineſs he teaches ill,
Whoſe own ſelf-ignorance is all his ſkill;
Who laying coolly every prudence by,
Would live at random, and at random dy.
Yon rimer's gaieties my grief engage:
For what care I or for his gout or age?
His cramping ails inſpir'd his verſes free:
He paints his mirth, and I his ſorrow ſee.

He ſings his paſſion in diſtreſsful ſtrain,
And feebly following his languid vein,
Mocks the approach of Death, however near;
But leſs would mock it, if he leſs did fear.
Ye indolents of gay Petronius' ſchool,
Contented mortals, who yourſelves can fool,
In vain you boaſt to me your joyous days:
Your happineſs ſhall ne'er my envy raiſe.
Even in the time ſo grateful to your mind,
Dire reign of Venus, when deplor'd mankind
Extoll'd each pleaſure to imagin'd bliſs,
And gave each paſſion apotheoſis;
The ſage muſt ſtill, howe'er aſham'd or loth,
Diſperſe his incenſe to the gods of ſloth.
Their charms ſometimes may hurry us along,
Tho' hapleſs he who yields his freedom long;
But 'gainſt a foe that oft muſt love engage,
Why war implacable ſhould mortals wage?
A moment's peace as guilt how ſhall I fear?
Is not the God of Chriſtians too ſevere,
Requiring to renounce for him myſelf,
For him to fly my pleaſure, power, pelf;
Whate'er I love, kind nature to enſlave,
And tyrant-like to cruſh the frame he gave?
Shall I find joy his rig'rous laws to keep,
When he pronounces bleſt the eyes that weep?

Thus

Thus ſpeaks a man his conflict of deſires,
Againſt Religion whom his ſoul admires.
Struck with her greatneſs, he believes, adores:
Damp'd with her doctrine, ſtill he douts, explores.
The God whoſe doom he dreads, he fond repels:
His reaſon ſatisfy'd, his heart rebels.
Let's cloſe the triumph, one laſt fortreſs preſs,
And ſtorm Impiety's forlorn receſs.

If with Religion I dare ſtill contend,
To Reaſon's voice an ear I needs muſt lend.
When I decline to own the heavenly law,
Then Nature's muſt commence my onely aw.
To whether of the yokes to yield my voice,
Be Int'reſt judge deciſive of my choice.
Reaſon, indulgent to our puny pow'rs,
Can never make but eaſy virtues ours.
Theſe ne'er in Plato let us hope to find;
Nor Seneca nor Cic'ro ſhall we mind.
Thoſe cenſors of the feebleneſs of man,
Ofter inſpir'd by pride than wiſdom's plan,
Perhaps, in writings, tho' not barb'rous, rude,
Have reaſon leſs than vanity purſu'd.
But each leſs rigid doctor beſt decides;
Then be the bards alone our lovely guides.

From their enchanting ſtrains, compoſed to charm,
Morality can menace no alarm.
There trace we then the chain where duties bind
Us one and all, to Heaven, ourſelves, mankind.

" Jove circles all; he pours around the day:
" To him who gave us all, let's all repay.
" Then plunge we in his arms, his goodneſs laud:
" Leſs dear I'm to myſelf than to my God.
" In vain would barren fumes of incenſe riſe,
" T' appeaſe the mighty ſov'rain of the ſkies.
" He ſpurns the off'ring of a guilty hand:
" Sweet innocence of heart is his demand.
" See heaven-born Juſtice by his ſide advance,
" And caſt o'er all the all-compriſing glance;
" Demand her victims with a brandiſh'd ſword,
" Preſenting him the crimes her rolls afford:
" But kneeling Clemency with-holds her fire,
" And tend'ring him our tears diſarms his ire.

" When for myſelf ſo oft I mercy ſue,
" Shall I have none for my offender too?
" The wretch I pity who can mean me wrong:
" Be vengeance heaven's to whom its rights belong.
" If I don't dare to hate th' afflicting foe,
" To the obliging friend what don't I ow?

" His

" His faults to palliate with officious names;
" My heart my ingenuity enflames.
" He palliates too; good offices go round,
" Love paid with love, with friendſhip friendſhip crown'd.
" My charity extends o'er all I ſee.
" I am a man; each man's a friend to me.
" The poor, the ſtranger claim my aid and care;
" With joy I greet them, ſent by heaven to ſhare
" Wealth which for me alone has never flow'd:
" For ſolid wealth is onely wealth beſtow'd.
" Ye gen'rous ſouls, the gen'rous joy applaud:
" The bounteous man is onely leſs than God.
" This bleſt philanthropy ſhall ſtill diſplay
" Each virtue's anchor and unſhaken ſtay.
" Would he my peace annoy, my love alarm,
" And 'gainſt my ſpouſe my ſad ſuſpicion arm?
" Crime, which in every region dread'ſt thy fate,
" His heart defies thy firſt, thy blandeſt bait.
" Who feeds a ſecret flame without controul,
" Bears ev'n in body pure a guilty ſoul.
" Shame is the rareſt boon the heavens beſtow,
" Darling of Gods above and men below;
" The richeſt flow'r that decks the richeſt vale;
" But blighted ſoon by indiſcretion's gale.
" Love, tender Love in vain his art employs:
" Bleſt Hymen onely can permit his joys.

" I

" I pow'rfully repreſs each paſſion's fire;
" The world preſents me nought I can admire.
" Free from ambition, carking cares forgot,
" I love the ſtation Heaven aſſigns my lot.
" Nor riches rivet, nor their abſence grieves:
" Me never avarice of reſt bereaves.
" I am no haughty menial of the great,
" Or them with me, or me with them to ſate.
" Vain bubbles, men ye puerile, purſue:
" What ſtrange inanity in all ye do!
" Diſguſted juſtly with whate'er I ſee,
" I haſte to live, and haſte to live for me.
" I ſeek and ſeiſe with ardor and delight
" Thoſe moments which ſo rapid ſuns enlight:
" Gifts ſcarce obtain'd, when lo! they're ſnatch'd away;
" Gifts tho' we loſe, imputed for their ſtay.
" Th' eſteem of men can ne'er my ardor ſteal:
" I ſhun their glances, and my life conceal.
" Serene, ſecure from cenſure and from pride,
" O may my days in ſhade and ſilence glide!
" This day perhaps of mine the laſt has ſhone:
" Too known to all we dy, yet ſelf-unknown.
" Death I await, nor dread him nor deſire;
" I can nor chooſe him, nor advance him nigh'r.
" A Cato's model every man may give:
" The coward needs will dy: the brave can live."

Such

Such is the law I deem'd ſo big with joy,
The flow'ry path that never knew to cloy.
What! all around the doctrine dire enthrals:
Thither Catullus, thither Horace calls;
Tibullus too the ſad remembrance brings,
Even when his Delia he ſo ſweetly ſings.
The moral ty by which mankind is bound,
In all is wrote, nay in an Ovid found.
Yes in thoſe writings that my rapture raiſe,
The rig'rous yoke oppreſſive Reaſon lays.
To what more heavy yoke, or harder law
Dooms me the God ſo terrible we draw?
My choice is fix'd: I heſitate no more.

But while attracted by fair Virtue's lore,
Self-love enjoined her onely pow'r to own,
Mild, chaſte, beneficent, for ſelf alone;
Unchang'd, great God, I bow to thy decree:
Mild, chaſte, beneficent, I'll live for thee.
Thus far from loſing, I ſhall daily prove
The every joy that crowns obedient love.
But the fair Virtue that enſlav'd my eyes,
What without thee, had it avail'd to priſe?
Struck with her charms, I ne'er had ſeen her nigh,
And but afar had ſent a barren ſigh.

Ah!

Ah! what indeed was man but error's fool,
Till the bleſt day of bright religion's rule?
The ſages' life their leſſons ſtill beli'd,
Lycurgus ſtemming ſwell'd the guilty tide.
Ovid ſometimes a Seneca would be:
In Seneca too oft we Ovid ſee.
To fury-guided Love who ſhall oppoſe?
To him by Solon's hands a temple roſe!
What Solon, ſhall avail thy wiſeſt laws,
When thou thyſelf deſert'ſt thy virtue's cauſe?
And what voluptuary ſhall bluſh at vice,
When his reformers own the ſame caprice?
All light was then but darkneſs in a gleam,
And often vanity would virtue ſeem:
Games I deteſt whence Cato muſt withdraw,
And ſcorn a Cato who exacts my aw.

Ne'er then the ſnare of human virtue hide:
When man is all his own, he's ſlave to pride.
He loves himſelf alone: to cure the woe
He muſt be ſever'd from himſelf, his foe.
But who ſhall bear the blow into his heart?
Religion's charm ſhall be the victor's dart.
She onely has the greateſt mound o'erthrown;
The greateſt miracle then let us own.

The heart is never void. A love effac'd,
By a new love muſt always be replac'd:
Each object by a lovelier lore expell'd
The heart's receſs, becomes with hate beheld.
Man lov'd himſelf: but God ſaid, man, *love me,*
Love's all my law; in love my ſeers agree.
Commandment new! which ſoon the lord that lays,
Lights in the heart the paſſion that obeys.
Man feels an ardent love that never ſates:
Big with reſiſtleſs God, himſelf he hates.
All hitherto within him he admir'd:
Now all within him is no more deſir'd.
Himſelf he humbles: from the lowly ſhade
Springs a new man, whom charity has made.
When not with ſelf, but love divine he burns,
Then with himſelf to friendſhip he returns.

So ſoon as order was by love reſtor'd,
The nobleſt virtues wond'ring Earth ador'd.
To Love indeed what e'er can prove a pain?
On Love, Diſtreſs and Death may frown in vain.
Unnumber'd martyrs haſte into their arms.
God will have blood no more: yet woe has charms.
Saints arm againſt themſelves in rig'rous hoſts:
What willing exiles every deſert boaſts!

Who ever guiltleſs take the guilty's fate.
Life is devoted to the virgin ſtate.
The body rules no more: the ſpotleſs ſoul
Bids ſilent Nature own her juſt controul.
Two feeling hearts by forming hand combin'd,
In guiltleſs joys a guiltleſs pleaſure find.
They hug their chain, they blow the hallow'd fire:
The orphan honors in the rich a ſire.
To juſteſt choler who can now give way,
When princes teach to pardon, and obey?
Great Theodoſius weeps, when Ambroſe aws;
The prince and prieſt like admiration cauſe.

At ſuch bright ſigns the fruit then let us own,
Which hero-bearing love has born alone.
A loveleſs worſhip but offends the ſkies:
God's incenſe due muſt undivided riſe.
His temples are our hearts: what bounds, you'll ſay,
Are ſet the love which we're oblig'd to pay?
If this you aſk, you love not yet indeed.
Full of the ſcope on which its ardors feed,
What other ſcope can any heart admit?
To know no bounds can onely love befit.
No myſtical chimera let us fein:
How muſt we love? This Nature ſhall explain.
Diſdaining of all elſe the languid art,
Let's onely hear the language of the heart.

Earth's

" Earth's greatneſs, O my God, is not my pole:
" No thirſt of treaſures e'er torments my ſoul.
" But to be thine alone, alone can draw:
" My pleaſure, greatneſs, riches is thy law.
" For mortals' poor renown I never pine:
" O may my glory catch no eyes but thine!
" Enwrapt in thee, to mortal ken unknown,
" My cares can find repoſe in thee alone:
" Thou'lt in the night profound ſupply the day;
" Thou'lt in the weary wild the world repay.
" In vain would men make all their treaſures mine:
" They ne'er ſhould alienate my heart from thine.
" May I on thee with failing hand rely,
" Thee with my lateſt glance embrace and dy!"

In ſuch warm tranſports Love muſt break away;
But ah! the flame divine decays each day.
Scarce does it ſtill emit ſome languid fires:
Now Love in heart, now Faith in ſoul expires.
Ah! whither fled, fair ages, infant days,
The Church's happy times, her pride, her praiſe?
And ye firſt Chriſtians, wondrous mortals, ſay,
Can theſe be yours, the children of to-day?
One treaſure and one heart ye all poſſeſs'd:
Bound by like law, each other we deteſt.

Dire deteſtation, or unpitying rage,
Which hurries us along His war to wage,
Who pard'ning love enjoins, bids battles ceaſe!
What blood profanes thy name, O God of peace!
Did they no other banner own than thine,
Impreſs'd they on their ſoul thy traits divine,
Thoſe heroes croſs'd, who from unfaithful hands
Vow'd but to raviſh erſt the holy lands.
Their crimes made oft to ſhrink the faithleſs ſoul:
Their morals cenſur'd, let's their zeal extol.
But ever blaſted be the odious names,
Which of ſo many wars illum'd the flames.
What barb'rous doctors could miſlead our ſenſe,
So far as for a tenet's dire defence;
To arm with holy rage's keeneſt darts,
And plunge our argument in perverſe hearts?

But to conclude my ſong I haſte away:
Yet felt I not my feeble voice decay,
Your errors I perhaps would ſtill engage,
O ye who wedding mad heretic rage,
Of the ſame God begot, ſame mother born,
Againſt our armies elevate your horn.
United once, tho' ſadly ſcatter'd thus,
Whoſe was the choice? 'twas you deſerted us.
Your fires our parents' brethren we deplore;
Ah! why are you our brethren now no more?

Have

Have you diſſolv'd ſo precious ties for ay?
Come to our open arms, O come away.
Ye hapleſs victims bear your parent's fault:
Theirs was the crime that you to error brought.
Rejoin the quitted ſtandard: ne'er deſpair,
All pardon'd by the God attended there.
What fear when even our elder treach'rous race,
His parricides themſelves ſhall once find grace,
When wrath divine 'gainſt them no more ſhall burn?
Againſt all hope, ſtill hope we their return,

Yes, Jacob's name ſhall rouſe him gracious, kind;
His ancient promiſe he'll recal to mind,
His mercy's treaſure he will never drain:
The blaſted tree ſhall flouriſh once again.
The day of penitence is fix'd; one day
The ſon ſhall mourn the ſire's reproach away.

Tremble we in our turn: for they're foretold,
The days in which our hearts ſhall all grow cold:
The fatal time draws nigh. Ye bleſt controuls,
Ye ſtill can captivate ſome vulgar ſouls.
But you a lofty genius braves, we ſee,
And loudly boaſts this day of thinking free.
He douts, he glories, and without diſmay
Bears to the tomb his noble dout away.

In heathen times to every thing they bow:
By oppoſite exceſs, to nothing now.
The oracle muſt be fulfill'd in all:
Sapp'd by degrees Faith's tott'ring tow'rs muſt fall.
Until the day denounc'd in ſacred verſe,
The day impendent on the univerſe:
A day of retribution, weal and woe!

Methinks I ſee it, ſhudd'ring at the ſhow.
I hear old Ocean's waves with horror roar:
I ſee the ſhaking orbs now ſmile no more.
The vengeful fire illumes: the trumpet's ſound
Awakes the dead from their receſs profound.
That day the laſt to Univerſe ſhall be.
Before the throne each various race I ſee.
He comes to hail his own, whoſe courſe is run,
And finiſh what Religion has begun.
Earth, Sun, and Time himſelf devour'd muſt dy:
Eternity's dread gates unbolted fly.

Born on the clouds above the melted ſpheres,
Announc'd by glory, all the God appears.
Amidſt the thunder's roar, the lightning's glare,
His radiant throne ariſes high in air.
The Lord of all the parting curtains ſhow,
Whom hapleſs he who but begins to know.

His angels far and wide extend their ſound:
Mankind once more ariſing from the ground
Nor rock, nor refuge finds; in deep amaze
Sees nothing great but what its Judge diſplays.
The dazzling beams that pierce his darkling cell,
The impious with abhorrence would repel;
But can no more. The glory lays him low;
He ſinks into the deep of endleſs woe:
Seat of unceaſing tears, of doleful cries!
Of nameleſs horror, where no hopes ariſe!
If ſcarce a Socrates ſecure ſhall be,
If not a Titus can prefer a plea;
What pangs unimag'd muſt fulfil your fate,
Ye faithleſs, flinty Chriſtians, wiſe too late!
When the poor Bonze extols his fruitleſs pain,
When the pale Bramin has abſtain'd in vain;
They learn that all they underwent below
Has but enhanc'd what they've to undergo.
Th' aſtoniſh'd Muſulman regrets his fall,
Blaſphemes his prophet, paradiſe, and all:
And for the joys the fool expected there,
He now finds nought but horror and deſpair.
The Chriſtian, he alone, knows no amaze:
On the tribunal where the lightnings blaze,
He ſees the God whom he believ'd unſeen,
Who all his love, and all his hope has been.

But faith and hope no longer needful found,
With endleſs love his faith and hope are crown'd.

HOLY RELIGION, may my humble ſtrain
Sacred to thee, to that great day remain!
To one bleſt muſe, who breaths thy glory, give
With thee coeval that her name may live;
Her name---But what? ah! whither have I ſtray'd?
A heart entirely thine would pride invade?
Of each deſire be thou the rule and guide:
And be thy glory all thy poet's pride.

NOTES:

NOTES:

UPON

CANTO I.

Verſe 49. *WHAT arm, unnumber'd orbs, can you ſuſpend?* The ancients who thought they ſaw all the ſtars, fancied they could alſo fix their number. But ſince the teleſcope has diſcovered to us ſo many beyond the ken of the naked eye, aſtronomers are obliged to confeſs the ſtars innumerable.

58. *Still brightly new, yet beaming ſtill the ſame!* The magnitude of the heavenly bodies appears to us inconceivable. Saturn is four thouſand, Jupiter eight thouſand, and the ſun a million of times bigger than the earth. Our imagination loſes itſelf in the immenſe ſpace which contains all thoſe enormous bodies. "It is an infinite "ſphere," *ſays Mr Paſcal*, "of which the center is "every-where, the circumference no-where." The littleneſs of the animals with which the microſcope has made us acquainted, is equally beyond conception: ſo that we find ourſelves placed between the infinities of magnitude and minuteneſs, and our imagination is loſt between both.

63. *Thou dreadful ſea, who wouldſt the land devour*, &c. Whatever high idea the ſtars give us of the power of God, we ought ſtill to ſay with the author of Pſ. xciii. 5. *The waves of the ſea are mighty, and rage horribly: but yet the Lord who dwelleth on high, is mightier.* Thoſe waves which ſo often menace the earth with a new deluge, come and burſt upon a grain of ſand; and be the ſea never ſo furious in approaching its banks, it retires with reverence, and curls back its waves in adoration of the order it finds written, *Hitherto ſhalt thou come, but no further: and here ſhall thy proud waves be ſtayed.* Job xxxviii. 11.

73. *A throbbing heart*, &c. 'When man ſees death 'at hand,' *ſays the younger Pliny*, 'then he remembers 'that there are Gods, and that he is man.' *Tunc deos, tunc hominem eſſe ſe meminit.* Many a free-thinker has changed his note at that moment, and given occaſion to ſay of him,

Oculis errantibus, alto
Quæſivit cœlo lucem, ingemuitque repertâ.

'His reſtleſs eyes the heavenly light explor'd;
'And when they found the light, the light deplor'd.'

82. *The flow'rs that deck me has his bounty ſtrow'd.* 'In 'the ſmalleſt flower, the ſmalleſt leaf, the ſmalleſt fea-'ther,' *ſays St. Auguſtine*, 'God hath not neglected the 'juſt proportion of parts.' *Nec avis pennulam, nec herba floſculum, nec arboris folium, ſine partium ſuarum convenientia reliquit.*

91. *Scarce does my ſap*, &c. The ſap of the earth circulates in trees and plants, as the blood in the body of animals.

98. *Knew'ſt*

98. *Knew'ſt thou their ſalutary pow'rs to trace.* The aſhes of fern, thiſtle, and other deſpiſed herbs, ſerve to make glaſs and cryſtal. The nettle is uſed as a remedy; and armed with darts, 'becauſe,' *as Pliny the naturaliſt obſerves,* 'Nature ſo fortifies ſalutary plants;' *(Ne depaſcat avida quadrupes, ne procaces manus rapiant, ne inſidens avis infringat, his muniendo aculeis, teliſque armando, remediis ut ſalva ſit)* 'leſt the greedy beaſt ſhould 'crop them, or the raſh hand ſhould raviſh them, or the 'brooding bird ſhould cruſh them.

101. *Each ſpringing plant,* &c. The fecundity of plants proves the deſign of the Creator, who not onely provides for the preſervation of the ſpecies, but for the wants of ſo many animals who find their food in ſeed. Pliny the nat. book 18. aſſures that one buſhel of wheat produces ſometimes 150, and that a governor ſent to Nero 360 ſtalks ſprung from a ſingle grain: which naturally leads him to the reflection, that there is no grain more fertile than wheat, becauſe there is none ſo neceſſary to man. *Tritico nihil fertilius: hoc ei natura tribuit, quoniam eo maximè alebat hominem.* For the ſame reaſon it is the grain that keeps the longeſt. Bread has been made of wheat above 100 years old. Pliny who could ſo well admire the wonders of nature, O aſtoniſhing! forgot nature's author. And yet they lead ſo neceſſarily to a God, that philoſophy, as ſays St. Cyril, may be called faith's catechiſm. *Philoſophia catechiſmus ad fidem.*

116. *O thou who madly mak'ſt of chance of God,* &c. The materialiſts for the word *chance* uſe *neceſſity.* The intelligent will eaſily allow me the uſe of either, ſince they denote the ſame thing, that is, effects without cauſe.

118. *The vernal ſwallow*, &c. Cicero admires the prudence of the birds, (*Aves quietum requirunt ad pariendum locum, & cubilia ſibi nidoſque conſtruunt, eoſque quàm poſſunt molliſſimè ſubſternunt.* De nat. Deor.) in their ſearch of a quiet place for breeding, in the conſtruction of their neſts, and the artful ſoftneſs with which they make their beds.

130. *With mighty fire their feeble bodies ſwell.* The moſt timorous are then the moſt courageous. A hen will attack a man. This tenderneſs ceaſes when the young need no longer aid: then ſires and ſons know each other no more. Pliny indeed pretends, b. 8. 'that 'rats with filial duty feed their fathers when decayed 'with age:' *Genitores feſſos ſenectâ alunt inſigni pietate.* But for this we are not obliged to take his word.

137. *Unnumber'd race*, &c. In the fecundity of animals we find the ſame deſign of the Creator as in that of plants. He at once preſerves the ſpecies, and provides its food. The ſmaller animals which ſerve for ſuſtenance to the greater, are ſuch as multiply the moſt. Did wild animals multiply like tame, men would ſoon ceaſe to be lords of the earth. With regard to men, according to the Engliſh calculations, there reigns always a pretty equal proportion between the deaths and births; in ſo much that one generation goes, another comes, and the earth can neither be overcharged nor deſolate.

139. *Some, who foreboding winter's rage betimes*, &c. An Engliſh author fond of ſingular opinions, has ſeriouſly advanced that birds of paſſage fly into the moon. It is certain that many paſs the ſeas, and others ly torpid in the cavities of rocks.

154. *More*

154. *More hid the author, more to be admir'd.* 'Nature,' *ſays Pliny,* 'is never more entire than in the 'minuteſt things; and her majeſty, confined within narrow compaſs, is but the more admirable.' *Natura nunquam magis quàm in minimis tota——in arctum coarcta naturæ majeſtas, nullâ ſui parte mirabilior.*

159. *Where in their public ſubterranean cells,* &c. It has even been pretended that they gnaw away the ſproutings, to prevent the inconvenience of moiſture. Aldovrandus ſays he has ſeen their granaries. Derham relates ſeveral other amazing particulars. Yet Mr Réaumur alledges that ants ſleep all the winter, and eat none at all; that the grain they are obſerved to carry off, ſerves onely to the rearing of their ſtructures; a doctrine by which all their magazines are deſtroyed. But till the new obſervation be generally eſtabliſhed, we may ſpeak after the ancient opinion, which is authoriſed not only by Solomon, but by many other naturaliſts. If the ants can no longer boaſt their granaries, we muſt at leaſt admire their buildings, which are a ſufficient proof of their providence of the future. In fine, Derham ſpeaks of little animals to be found in the Ukrain, who after hoarding proviſion in the ſummer, paſs the winter under ground.

163. *Poor ſpurn'd recluſe,* &c. Ariſtotle advanced that ſhell-animals have no eyes. The microſcope has brought us out of this error. The ſnail's horns are optic nerves, at the top of which each eye is placed. Derham, Liſter, and the author of *Spectacle de la Nature* affirm it, as well as Dr. Brown in his treatiſe on vulgar errors. I know however that many natural philoſophers dout this

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as well as the ſtore-houſes of the ants, becauſe obſervers do not always agree. In the 5th Canto of this poem, with regard to man's ignorance of the ſecrets of nature, it is ſaid we know facts, but ſeldom cauſes. Nay the facts are not always certain, becauſe God who gives us eyes to conduct us, *affords us none his every work to ſcan.* But we ſee enough, to know and admire the author.

173. *Tho' now he eyes his brethren with diſdain,* &c. The author of *Spectacle de la Nature* calls the butter-flies, *les reſſuſcités du peuple chenille,* 'the reſurgents of the caterpillar kind.' They ſuck from the flowers a juice that ſeems deſtined for the bees. Ovid was little acquainted with the wonders of this reſurrection, when he ſuffered himſelf to ſay, Book 25.

Agreſtes tineæ (res obſervata colonis)
Ferali mutant cum papilione figuram.

Moths ſhift each year, obſerves th' attentive hind,
Shape with the proud papilionaceous kind.

189. *The Lord whom all thoſe precious gifts endow,* &c. *Os homini ſublime dedit.* To man he gave a countenance ſublime, ſays Ovid; and Cicero aſſigns the cauſe. Man alone is deſtined to behold the heavens. *Sunt enim è terra homines, non ut incolæ atque habitatores, ſed quaſi ſpeculatores ſuperarum rerum atque cœleſtium; quarum ſpectaculum ad nullum aliud genus animantium pertinet.* 'For 'men ſpring from the earth, not ſo much to be its tenants 'and inhabitants, as to be ſpectators of high and heavenly things; an honor which belongeth to no other kind 'of animal.'

191. *The ſoul's vaſt ſtage,* &c. We have many parts in common with other animals; but ſome we have peculiar

liar to a being created to behold the heavens, to walk upright, to ſpeak, &c. ſuch are the brow, the hands, the organs of voice. Gallian obſerves that carnivorous animals have pointed claws and ſharp teeth; whereas man has flat nails, and but one canine tooth on each ſide? "becauſe," *ſays that author*, "nature well knew that "ſhe was forming a mild animal, who ſhould derive his "ſtrength not from his body but from his reaſon."

197. *There bluſhes timid Modeſty*, &c. Upon the admirable ſtructure of the human body recourſe may be had to Gallian, Ray, Nieuwentyt, and Derham.

203. *What crouds of objects does the eye unite!* We have two eyes without ſeeing objects double, in order that one may repair the loſs of the other. The ſpiders have four, ſix, and eight, becauſe having no neck. and conſequently unable to move the head, the multiplicity of eyes ſupplies the defect of that motion. The Creator's deſign appears in all. Thus it is that children get no teeth till they are paſt the breaſt; becauſe did teeth come ſooner, they would be prejudicial at once to the infant and the nurſe.

207. *Heaven! what frail texture!* &c. What a variety is contained in the ſpacious magazine of the memory! Every thing occurs at the firſt ſignal; and when ought uncalled intrudes, we have the power of driving it away. *Quædam ſtatim prodeunt, quædam requiruntur diutius, quædam catervatim ſe proruunt.* 'Some things 'immediately preſent themſelves, ſome are longer in 'coming, and ſome occur in crouds. S. Aug. Conf.

213. *Thoſe ſubtile ſpirits*, &c. I mean, what motions in my tongue, lips, and lungs! According as I look far

or near, my eye-ball dilates or contracts itſelf: my will has no hand in either. It may ſuſpend or quicken my breathing, which is of uſe for ſpeaking. Yet when I ſleep, I breath without knowing or willing it; which proves that if our ſoul has dominion over our body, it holds it not of itſelf, but of a power ſuperior to its own.

229. *Are theſe wiſe laws ſupported by my choice?* Of all the extravagances of which the human mind is capable, that of the Epicureans appears the moſt unaccountable. They imagined that chance had made all; that the parts of our body were not deſtined to any uſe; but that we made uſe of them, becauſe we found them; that the firſt men ſprung from earth warmed with the ſun. "The "earth in its youth," *ſays Lucretius*, B. 5. "brought "forth man and beaſt: afterwards it became barren as a "woman becomes with age." This opinion, which began in Egypt, ſeemed probable to the ancients, from the frogs which they fancied they ſaw ſpring from the ground in time of rain. Our natural philoſophers have taught us to laugh at ſuch a folly.

235. *I hear the libertine*, &c. The objection of natural and moral evil gave riſe to the ancient opinion of the two principles, revived by the Manicheans. This objection admits no anſwer but from the Chriſtian religion. Bayle, who in the article of the Manichees, and in that of the Paulicians, ſeems fond to enlarge the difficulty, owns however that it cannot be ſolved but by revelation, which exhibits to us the cauſe of the diſorder. I ſhall alſo object this to the deiſts in the fifth Canto; but having onely the atheiſts to anſwer in this, it ſuffices me to ſhow them that the world is not the work of chance, and that the diſorders we fancy we ſee in it, do not hinder

hinder us from acknowleging in all a ſupreme intelligence.

244. *Deep caves*, &c. The imperfections of the earth are often a conſequence of the general confuſion occaſioned by the deluge, as I ſhall hint in the fifth Canto.

259. *Our art from poiſon's ſelf can borrow aid.* The viper, hemloc, &c. are daily uſed in medicine.

263. *The ſea*, &c. "Whether the rivers," ſays Derham in his phyſico-theology, "procede from the con-"denſed vapors, or rains; whether they come, from the "ſea by attraction, filtration or diſtillation; or whether "all thoſe cauſes concur, it is certain that the mountains "have the greateſt ſhare in theſe operations." Thoſe enormous excreſcences of the earth are like ſo many alembics.

283. *Of diff'rent turn*, &c. The Po, the Rhone, and the Rhine have their ſources in the Alps: the two laſt iſſue from the ſame mountain.

302. *The image uncompar'd of th' infinite.* Locke pretends that we form the idea of infinite by the power we have of adding always to the idea of finite. Deſcartes, and before him, Plato and Cicero believed that the idea of infinite was innate in us. And indeed, why do we judge objects finite? The finite ſuppoſes the infinite, as the leſs the greater: thus we do not find ourſelves finite but thro' the idea of the infinite that is in us.

313. *Before th' Eternal*, &c. No nation has ever been found, even in the new world, that had not a worſhip

eſtabliſhed in honor of ſome deity; and this conſent of all nations ought, according to Cicero, to be regarded as the law of nature. *Omni in re conſenſio omnium gentium lex naturæ putanda eſt.*

325. *In mad credulity*, &c. It is alſo Tully that ſays: *Multi de diis prava ſentiunt; omnes tamen eſſe vim & naturam divinam cenſent.* 'Many have prepoſterous notions 'of the gods; but all own the being of a divine power.' Idolatry touched in Canto III. proves that man has ever been perſwaded of a Deity; that he has ever ſought one; but that plunged in the pit of ſenſe, he has taken for divine whatever has ſtruck his ſenſes.

329. *All did Mezentius as Salmoneus blame.* Mezentius *contemptor divûm*, a ſcoffer of the Gods, is repreſented by Virgil as a tyrant univerſally hated. Salmoneus and Capaneus were, according to the poets, thunder-ſtruck for their impiety. Protagoras and Proticus were put to death for having ſpoken evil of the gods; and Socrates under the ſame pretext.

334. *Himſelf ſee proſtrate*, &c. Diocles ſeeing Epicurus in a temple, cried out: "Never did Jove appear to "me ſo great, as now that I ſee Epicurus on his knees."

336. *A pow'r that human pow'r ſeems to deride.*

Uſque adeo res humanas vis abdita quædam
Obterit, & pulcros faſces ſævaſque ſecures
Proculcare, ac ludibrio ſibi habere videtur.

It is ſo aſtoniſhing that Lucretius ſhould have made this confeſſion, that ſome aſſert he meant only a material power, void of underſtanding.

Bayle is not of this opinion. "In vain," ſays he in his article, "does this philoſopher obſtinately deny a

" providence, and aſcribe every thing to the neceſſary " motion of atoms; experience compels him to own a " peculiar tendency to overthrow our dignities: and " conſequently his *(vis abdita quædam) certain hidden* " *power* is a convincing proof againſt himſelf."

361. *Tho' noteleſs travelers ſhould tell the tale.* Bayle, who in his book upon the comet examines whether atheiſm be more criminal than idolatry, a queſtion which did not deſerve four volumes, quotes in proof that there may be atheiſts, the teſtimonies of ſome obſcure travelers. Tho' thoſe teſtimonies were true, what would they prove? A ſavage is like a child in whom reaſon has not yet diſcloſed itſelf.

375. *The ſocial duties,* &c. Montagne tells us that the whole morality of the cannibals conſiſts in two points; to be courageous in war, and to love their wives.

383. *For ſelf I live,* &c. According to Hobbes's ſcheme, there is no real diſtinction between juſtice and injuſtice; but power conſtitutes right.

389. *His judge,* &c.

Exemplo quodcunque malo committitur, ipſi
Diſplicet auctori; prima eſt hæc ultio, quod ſe
Judice nemo nocens abſolvitur ———
Pœna autem vehemens ac multo ſevior illis,
Nocte dieque ſuum verſare in pectore teſtem.

Whate'er tranſgreſſion ill example brings,
It ſhocks the author whence the miſchief ſprings.
This is the firſt revenge, that in the heart
The judge ne'er ſcreen'd the criminal from ſmart.
But ah! what pain, by night and day what peſt,
To bear one's witneſs in one's conſcious breaſt!

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394. *Never*

394. *Never yet criminal himſelf forgave.* The ſaying of Cicero is admirable: *Virtutis & vitiorum, grave ipſius conſcientiæ pondus eſt, quâ ſublatâ jacent omnia.* 'To 'virtue or to vice, important is the weight of its own 'conſcience, which once withdrawn all diſtinctions fall 'to the ground.' The ſame Cicero ſays alſo: *Magna vis eſt conſcientiæ in utramque partem, ut neque timeant, qui nihil commiſerunt; & pœnam ſemper ante oculos verſari putent, qui peccaverunt.* 'Great is the power of 'conſcience on both ſides, as it ſecures the guiltleſs from 'fear, and ſets puniſhment ever before the eyes of the 'guilty.'

397. *Suſpended o'er his head,* &c. Damocles extoll'd the happineſs of Dionyſius the tyrant; but changed his note when at his table he perceived a ſword ſuſpended over him by a thread: which made Horace ſay,

Diſtrictus enſis cui ſuper impia
Cervice pendet, non Siculæ dapes
Dulcem elaborabunt ſaporem.

In vain to joy the wretch pretends;
A naked ſword his neck impends:
Not Sicily's moſt dainty meat
Shall labor him the ſmalleſt ſweet.

410. *The woful image,* &c. In that famous letter, of which the diſorder makes Tacitus ſay, that could we open the heart of tyrants, we ſhould ſee how they are tortured: *adeo facinora ipſi quoque in ſupplicium verterant.* 'So convert they their crimes into their puniſhment.'

413. *Unchang'd, eternal thus are virtue's laws. Satis enim nobis, ſi modò aliquid in philoſophia profecimus, perſuaſum*

ſuaſum eſſe debet, ſi omnes deos hominesque celare poſſimus, nihil tamen avarè, nihil injuſtè, nihil libidinosè, nihil incontinenter eſſe faciendum. 'For if we have made never 'ſo little progreſs in philoſophy, we muſt be perſwaded, 'that tho' we could conceal our conduct both from 'gods and men, we ought on no occaſion to indulge 'avarice, injuſtice, luſt, or incontinence.' And this is what Tully every where inculcates, that independently of reward or puniſhment we ought to follow juſtice for juſtice-ſake.

He goes even ſo far as to ſuppoſe a man capable by the bare motion of his fingers to get a place in the latter will of the rich. 'Would he do it,' *ſays he*, 'were he 'certain never to be ſuſpected of poſſeſſing ſo wondrous 'a ſecret?' Cicero decides in the negative, and adds this fine expreſſion, 'Whoever wonders at this confeſſes 'that he knows not what is an honeſt man. *Hoc qui admiratur, is ſe, quid ſit vir bonus, neſcire fatetur.* Offic. l. 3.

417. *The Romans' ſelves, howe'er a ſpurious breed.* Among the Romans, who boaſted themſelves the children of Mars and Venus, even before they had laws againſt adultery, Lucretia's misfortune which cauſed the kings to be expelled Rome, rendered her virtue famous. Livy makes her ſay, before ſhe kills herſelf, *Corpus eſt tantum violatum, animus inſons.* 'My body alone is violated, 'my mind continues guiltleſs.' Why then kill herſelf? as remarked by S. Auguſtine. Her ſorrow merits praiſe, but not her death.

419. *By that innate inwritten law,* &c. Tully has ſpoken of the natural law with equal eloquence and truth. *Eſt quidem vera lex, diffuſa in omnes conſtans, ſempiterna. Huic legi non abrogari fas eſt, neque derogari in hâc aliquid*

quid licet, neque tota abrogari poteſt, neque verò aut per ſenatum, aut per populum ſolvi hâc lege poſſumus —— neque ſi nulla erat Romæ ſcripta lex de ſtupris, idcircò non contra illam legem ſempiternam Tarquinius vim Lucretiæ attulit. Erat enim ratio profecta à rerum natura, & ad rectè faciendum impellens, & à delicto avocans, quæ non tum denique incipit lex eſſe, cùm ſcripta eſt, ſed tum cùm orta eſt: orta eſt autem cum mente divina. 'There is indeed a real law common to all, conſtant, eternal. This law is not ſuſceptible either of partial or total abrogation, or of any derogation whatſoever; nor indeed can either ſenate or people abſolve from its obligation —— neither, tho' Rome had no written law concerning violation, doth it therefore follow that Tarquin did not violate that eternal law when he offered violence to Lucretia. For there was reaſon proceding from the nature of things, impelling to right, and diſſwading from wrong; which needed not writing to commence a law: but then commenced when reaſon roſe; and this with the divine mind.'

426. *Metius and Tarquin*, &c. The traitor Metius and the cruel Tarquin were not tranſgreſſors of any written law for Rome as yet had none. They were condemned by that eternal and irrevocable law which is antecedent to every human inſtitution.

439. *What long regrets, O Virtue ſtill ador'd.* Claudian's picture of her is this:

Ipſa quidem virtus pretium ſibi, ſolaque latè
Fortunæ ſecura nitet, nec faſcibus ullis
Erigitur, plauſuque petit clarescere vulgi,
Nil opis externæ cupiens, nil indiga laudis,
Divitiis animoſa ſuis. ——

Virtue's

Virtue's her own reward; ſtill ſhe alone
Secure of fortune and of fame has ſhone.
No honors or applauſes fan her fires:
She needs no praiſes, and no pomp deſires,
Conſcious of native wealth.——————

It is certain, as I ſhow in Canto VI. that without the Chriſtian Religion there is no true virtue; yet among the heathens themſelves the ſecret complacency of having no ſelf-reproach, *nil conſcire ſibi, nullâ palleſcere culpâ* made an Ariſtides taſte that happineſs which a Catiline could not. Brutus, it may be ſaid, about to kill himſelf, broke out in this manner againſt virtue: 'O wretched virtue! thou art but a name; and I ſerved thee as if thou hadſt been a reality: but I find thou art no more than the ſlave of fortune.' Brutus, who made all virtue to conſiſt in his wild love of liberty, upon ſeeing Antony's party victorious, exclaimed ſo in deſpair: but how could he ſay he had been in the ſervice of virtue, he who had ſo baſely aſſaſſinated Ceſar his benefactor?

NOTES:

NOTES:

UPON

CANTO II.

Ver. 7. *WHEN firſt emerging 'midſt alarms and fears*, &c. Upon the picture of our miſeries hear we firſt the wiſe man. *I praiſed the dead which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive: yea, better is he than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not ſeen the evil work that is done under the ſun.* Eccleſ. iv. 2. 3.

Hear we next the heathens:

Tum porro puer, ut ſævis projectus ab undis
Navita, nudus humi jacet infans———
Cui tantum in vita reſtat ſuperare dolorum.

Then like the ſailor whom the waves have thrown
Their cruel ſport, upon a coaſt unknown;
Behold the naked infant on the ground,
Who little knows what ills in life abound.

To Lucretius add we Cicero quoted by Saint Auguſtine. *Hominem non ut à matre ſed à noverca natum, corpore nudo, fragili & infirmo, animo autem anxio ad moleſtias, in quo tamen ineſſet obrutus quidam divinus ignis.* 'Man ſeems 'born not of a mother, but of a ſtep-dame; with a 'naked frail and infirm body, and with a mind the prey

of

' of anxiety and ſorrow; in which however lies ſmo-
' thered a certain divine flame.' To Tully's plaints join we thoſe of Pliny the naturaliſt. b. 7. *Jacet manibus pedibuſque devinctis flens animal cæteris imperaturum, & à ſuppliciis vitam auſpicatur, unam tantum ob culpam, quia natum eſt.* ' Bound hand and foot ſprawls the weeping ' animal, born to commandthe reſt; and commences life ' with torture, for this onely fault, that it is born!' It is a well known ſaying of the ancients, that the firſt happineſs is not to be born, the next to dy ſpeedily. Both Theognis and Cicero have it. *Primum non naſci, alterum quam citò mori.* With great injuſtice therefore has Mr Paſcal been accuſed of exaggerating thro' miſanthropy the miſeries of man. He has drawn them leſs ſtrongly than the very heathens, and the picture of our wretchedneſs he has contraſted by that of our greatneſs; whereas Pliny has been bold enough to ſay, that nature's beſt boon to man was the power of putting himſelf to death.

27. *With Eſchines*, &c. Demoſthenes's famous rival, whoſe oration for the crown is ſo beautiful.

28. *I read enraptur'd Homer's fabled page.* St. Auguſtine in his confeſſions reproaches himſelf with the delight he had taken in his youth to read the works of Virgil. " The reading of that poet, *ſays he*, tended " onely to load my memory with the wanderings of one " Eneas, while I forgot my own."

40. *Each ancient vortex vaniſh'd into ſmoke.* Sir Iſaac Newton deſtroys Deſcartes's vortexes as well as his ſyſtem of colors. According to his experiments, light is a collection of colored rays: a ray is divided into ſeven

parts, and the mixture of the primitive produces the different colors. But notwithſtanding what he ſays of the ſeven firſt colors, M. de Fay read at a public aſſembly of the *académie des ſciences* a diſſertation to prove that inſtead of Sir Iſaac's ſeven primitive colors, we ought to admit but three.

53. *That hapleſs man*, &c. In this paſſage, it is eaſy to diſcover Mr Paſcal: thus it is he humbles man. But at the ſame time that he abaſes, he exalts him. Montagne depreſſes him, and leaves him without hope or conſolation. If he is at every turn talking of himſelf, it is onely to decry himſelf. "My mind is ſo cloſely wedded "to my body, *ſays he*, that when its companion has the "cholic, it has it too. If health and fine weather ſmile "upon me, then am I an honeſt fellow——my virtue is "a virtue, or innocence, to ſay better, merely acciden-"tal——the uncertainty of my judgement is ſo equally "balanced, that in moſt occurrences, I could willingly "compound with the deciſion of fortune and the dice." There now is a man who does much honor to his judgement, his wit, and his virtue!

80. *I wiſh, I win, and then I wiſh again.* "I bring "with me to the world, *ſays M. Boſſuet*, this love of "happineſs. Reaſon, from its very dawn, makes me "ſeek it by means right or wrong: but ſtill it ſeeks it. "However I deſire; which proves that I do not poſſeſs. "Deſire and perfect happineſs cannot ſubſiſt together."

88. *Or if I ſeem to love it, 'tis for me.* M. de la Rochefoucault has been reproached with having in his maxims annihilated our virtues, by referring all our actions to ſelf-love. He has painted us as we are, ſince the

the diſorder of ſin, as I obſerve in the ſixth Canto: *When man is all his own, he's ſlave to pride.*

118. *That I ſhould live, ſweet hope!* &c. *Dabam me tantæ ſpei,* 'I indulged the glorious hope,' ſays Seneca; very different from thoſe free-thinkers, who take pains to perſwade themſelves of the contrary, and who love to give themſelves up, ſo to ſay, to the hope of nothing.

122. *By chance we firſt were form'd,* &c. Such is the langage of the libertines in the book of wiſdom. *For we are born at all adventure: and we ſhall be hereafter as tho' we had never been,* Ch. ii. 2. And in Seneca the tragic poet.

Poſt mortem nihil eſt, ipſaque mors nihil,
Velocis ſpatii meta noviſſima.

Nought follows death, and death itſelf is nought,
But of a fleeting ſpan the fartheſt goal.

Quid habet iſta res aut lætabile aut glorioſum? 'What 'has this boaſt either joyous or glorious?' replies Cicero to thoſe who are capable of ſaying ſo merrily the ſaddeſt thing in the world, and which ſhould conſtitute our deſpair, were it true.

142. *That mind, O mortals,* &c. Lucretius, book 3.

Præterea gigni pariter cum corpore, & unà
Creſcere ſentimus, pariterque ſeneſcere mentem.
Poſt ubi jam validis quaſſatum eſt viribus ævi
Corpus, & obtuſis ceciderunt viribus artus,
Claudicat ingenium: delirat linguaque menſque.

168. *And thy dear Deity,* &c. Venus, whom Lucretius invokes in the beginning of his poem, and who is,

according to him, *hominum divûmque voluptas*, of men and gods the joy.

178. *In joy's ſweet flood a certain bitter ſprings.* By Lucretius's own confeſſion:

Uſque adeo de fonte leporum
Surgit amari aliquid quod in ipſis floribus angat.

184. *I think.* &c. Long before Deſcartes, Cicero had exhibited this proof which he had found in Plato. What appeared true to thoſe great men, ſeems doutful to Locke, who knows not but matter may think. 'There is no opinion,' *ſays Tully*, 'ſo odd, but it has 'ſome philoſopher for its patron.' Locke allows that we cannot conceive matter thinking; 'but thence,' ſays he, 'ought we to conclude that God cannot render it 'thinking?' The recourſe to the power of God does by no means excuſe ſuch a dout. In like manner might any geometrical truth be rendered uncertain, by ſaying, for inſtance, What do we know but God can make a ſquare a circle?

191. *Two beings oppoſite at one I find.* M. Arnaud, letter 501, obſerves that Deſcartes in what he wrote upon the ſoul ſeems to have been choſen by providence to confound the libertines after a manner ſuited to their tempers. "He had," *ſays he*, "an extraordinary greatneſs of ſoul, "an application to philoſophy alone, which they very "little ſuſpected, an open profeſſion of throwing off all "common prejudices, which is greatly to their taſte; "and thus too it is that he found means of evincing that "there is nothing more contrary to reaſon than to pre-"tend that the diſſolution of our body, which is no "other than the diſarrangement of ſome parts of matter,

"ſhould

" ſhould prove the extinction of our ſoul. And how " has he found it out? why, by eſtabliſhing upon clear " principles, that what thinks and what is extended, are " two ſubſtances wholely diſtinct; ſo that one cannot con- " ceive either that extent ſhould be a modification of " thinking ſubſtance, or thought a modification of " extended ſubſtance.

211. *Muſt they to nought return*, &c. The deſtruction of an extended ſubſtance is no more than the ſeparation of the parts. When one burns wood, or other fewel, nothing periſhes. The moſt ſubtile part flies off and is called *ſmoke*; the oily part adheres to the chimney and is named *ſoot*; the groſs part remains within the bottom of the chimney, and is termed *aſhes*.

217. *Thou, rich in ſmoke, invok'ſt thy Triſmegiſt.* Mercurius Triſmegiſtus, that is, thrice great; he whom the Alchymiſts hold the inventor of their ſcience: an author as chimerical as their art; *cujus principium mentiri, medium laborare, finis mendicare*; of which the beginning is to ly, the middle to labor, and the end to beg.

221. *Who made that ſalt, that ſalt immortal made.* All ſimple beings appear to us indeſtructible in themſelves; and ſo we may call them immortal. But we cannot tell whether the deſtruction of the univerſe will not go ſo far as the annihilation of the elements which compoſe it.

223. *When not the pow'r thou proveſt to deſtroy.* Notwithſtanding that power of life and death which the alchymiſts arrogate to themſelves, they can neither annihilate ſimple bodies, produce nor tranſmute them. When good arguments and ill ſucceſs ſhall at length be able to

open

open their eyes, they will doubtleſs ceaſe to ſeek the philoſopher's ſtone.

226. *What then's that moment when no life remains?* Lucretius himſelf has ſaid the ſame thing, in the three verſes which Lactantius cites, aſcribing them to the force of truth, which made the poet ſpeak ſo repugnantly to his ſyſtem.

Cedit enim retro de terra quod fuit ante,
In terram; ſed quod miſſum eſt ex ætheris oris,
Id rurſus cœli fulgentia templa receptant.

For earth to earth returns, as heretofore;
But what deſcended from th' ethereal ſhore,
That Heaven's refulgent domes receive again.

Bayle, in the article of Lucretius, would fain force on theſe verſes a meaning, which ſurely they do not imply; and the reflection of Lactantius is juſt: *Lucretius oblitus quid aſſereret, & quod dogma defenderet, hos verſos poſuit; ſed victus eſt veritate, & imprudenti ratio vera ſubrepſit.* 'Lucretius forgot what he was aſſerting, and what doctrine defending, when he dropt thoſe verſes; in which 'he was overcome by the force of truth, and when 'he was not aware, right reaſon ſtole in upon him.' b. 7. c. 12.

231. *That ſpirit*, &c. What pleaſure does the diſcovery of abſtracted truths afford us, a pleaſure wholely ſpiritual! Pythagoras, for having found the ſquares of the ſides of a triangle, ſacrificed a hecatomb in thankſgiving.

Plato extols the happineſs of thoſe who can contemplate the fair and the good in their principle. We cannot ſee eternal and immutable truths but in an eternal and immutable light. The being capable of illumination

from ſuch a light is not material. *Ex hoc habet argumentum divinitatis ſuæ*, ſays Seneca, *quod divina delectant, nec ut alienis intereſt, ſed ut ſuis.* 'From this it draws 'an argument of its divinity, that divine things delight 'it, and not as forain, but as its own.'

Cicero in his treatiſe of old age makes the ſame reflection. *Sic mihi perſuaſi, ſic ſentio: Quum tanta celeritas animorum ſit, tanta memoria præteritorum, futurorumque providentia, tot artes, tantæ ſcientiæ, tot inventa, non poſſe eam naturam quæ res eas contineat, eſſe mortalem.* 'Thus have 'I perſwaded myſelf, and thus I think: that, where 'reſides ſuch celerity of ſpirits, ſuch memory of the 'paſt and foreſight of the future, ſo many arts, ſciences 'and inventions, the nature which contains all theſe, 'cannot be mortal.' And in the Tuſculans he ſays again, *Mentem hominis, quamvis eam non videas, tamen ut Deum agnoſcis ex operibus ejus, ſic ex memoria rerum & inventione & celeritate motûs, omnique pulchritudine virtutis, mentem agnoſcito.* 'As we acknowlege God 'whom we ſee not but in his works, ſo tho' we ſee 'it not, yet from memory, invention, and celerity of 'motion, and from the beauty of virtue we muſt ac-'knowlege the mind.'

244. *O ye whoſe mighty names from death are free.* Tully improves this argument. *Quid procreatio liberorum, quid propagatio nominis, quid ipſa ſepulcrorum monumenta ſignificant, niſi nos futura cogitare.* 'What do 'the procreation of children, the propagation of a name, 'what even monumental marbles ſignify, if not that 'we extend our views into futurity.' Upon which Montagne makes this reflection: "Man is poſſeſſed with a "violent deſire to protract his being. For this he has "provided in all his parts: A ſepulture awaits his body,

"glory

" glory his name. He has employed all his notions to " rebuild himſelf, impatient of his fate, and fond to " bear up againſt it. The ſoul roams around in queſt " of conſolations where ſhe may fix and plant herſelf." Hence Montagne ought to have inferred the greatneſs of a being which nothing periſhable can ſatisfy.

252. ——————*In this vain deſign*

253. *I learn that immortality is mine.* This proof ſtruck St. Evremont: " The moſt ſenſible proof," *ſays he*, " that I have found of the ſoul's immortality is the " deſire I have of being always."

260. *When on thi wretched earth*, &c. *I beheld the tears of ſuch as were oppreſſed, and they had no comforter.* Eccleſ. iv. 1. This diſorder has often made the heathens murmur againſt providence. For Claudian thus:

Sed cùm res hominum tantâ caligine volvi
Aſpicerem lætoſque diu florere nocentes,
Vexarique pios; rurſus labefacta cadebat
Relligio——
Abſtulit hunc tandem Rufini pœna tumultum,
Abſolvitque deos.

When human things ſo deep involv'd I ſaw
In diſmal gloom, without the ſhow of law;
Beheld the guilty gay without annoy,
Beheld the pious pine bereft of joy;
My whole religion ſhook in act to fall.——
At length Rufinus' pain my tumult quell'd,
And clear'd the Gods in all that I beheld.

The reaſoning is falſe: heaven does not always juſtify itſelf after this manner. How many villains have paſſed unpuniſhed upon earth! Claudian ought thence to have inferred another manſion where all ſhall be reſtored.

" Were

" Were death the wreck of all," *ſays Plato*, " it were " no ſmall gain for the wicked."———but no: our " ſoul carries with it its good and bad qualities, which " are the cauſe of its eternal happineſs or woe."

270. *And ſoon as Greece replete with Homer's name.* The poets have preſerved by their fables the univerſal tradition of the immortality of ſouls. And ſo ſays Cicero: *Permanere animos arbitramur, conſenſu nationum omnium: qua in ſede maneant, qualeſque ſint, ratione diſcendum eſt. Cujus ignoratio finxit inferos—inde Homeri tota νεκυια; inde in vicinia noſtra Averni lacus*, &c. 'By the 'conſent of all nations, we judge that ſouls ſurvive; in 'what manſion they remain, and of what nature they 'are, is to be learned from reaſon: unacquaintedneſs 'with which hath feined the infernal regions——hence 'all Homer's νεκυια; hence in our neighborhood the lake 'of Avernus, &c.' And hence alſo the deſcription of hell in Plato, who marks out the abode of the juſt, and the abode of the wicked. " Thoſe," *ſays he*, " who " have committed crimes expiable by temporary pains, " remain there but a year."

285. *Learn, learn, O mortals; to revere the Gods.* So Virgil paints a profane perſon in Tartarus, crying out:

Diſcite juſtitiam moniti, & non temnere divos.

299. *The victim he to Eſculap would pay.* Socrates who appears ſo admirable in the account which Plato gives of his death, concludes his famous diſcourſes by deſiring that a cock be offered to Eſculapius. Thoſe who cannot perſwade themſelves that the laſt words of this hero of antiquity, ſhould have been ſo puerile, ſeek an allegorical meaning in them: but this meaning is hard to find; and

Crito's anſwer, *your deſire ſhall be obeyed*, ſhows that he takes the words of Socrates in the natural ſenſe, that is, in the ſuperſtitious one.

303. *Thy pompous promiſes of endleſs life.* So Seneca has called the proofs of the ſoul's immortality. *Credebam facilè opinionibus magnorum virorum rem gratiſſimam promittentium magis quam probantium.* 'I eaſily aſſented 'to the opinions of great men promiſing rather than 'proving ſo very grateful a thing.' Cicero appears ſometimes to think in the ſame manner. Not but that reaſon affords certain proofs of this truth; but as they are wholely ſpiritual, the ſoul forgets them, when it relapſes into ſenſe, and this it often does; which made M. Boſſuet ſay: "The ſoul degraded by ſin, captive of the "body whence its pleaſures and pains muſt procede, thinks "nothing, ſo to ſay but body; and blending with the "body which it animates, has difficulty at length to di-"ſtinguiſh itſelf from it: it forgets and miſtakes itſelf."

329. *Some I've been told*, &c. All nations have been plunged in the darkneſs of idolatry, and all nations have had philoſophers who have ſought the light; the prieſts in Egypt, the magi in Perſia, the brachmans or bramins in the Indies, the druids in the Gauls, and the famous ſages of Greece. But what light have they found? Had they found a certain one, we ſhould not have ſeen ſo many ſchemes and ſchools.

339. *Thoſe follies*, &c. Heraclitus, ſtiled the weeping philoſopher, mourned the folly of mankind: Democritus laughed at it. Both had reaſon, and at the ſame time both were fools for carrying things too far.

343. *O thou who ſought'ſt for light amidſt the glooms.* Democritus, who retired among the tombs of Abdera, for the better meditation, aſcribed the creation of the world, and even the liberty of man, to the fortuitous concourſe of atoms. What affinity is there between the declination of atoms and that liberty? This ſyſtem, which was alſo that of Epicurus and Lucretius, reflects no ſmall diſhonor upon the human mind.

356. *Claims all thy art*, &c. The Abderitans fearing for Democritus's intellects ſent Hippocrates to re-eſtabliſh his health.

366. *Is well exampled in the ſtupid hog.* Pyrrho in a ſtorm ſhowed his fellow-paſſengers a hog eating as undiſturbed as uſual, and thought to chear them by the example. This philoſopher, who douted of every thing, has given his name to a numerous ſect.

369. *Yes, light in hand the ſnarling ſage I ſpy.* Diogenes had neither religion, reaſon, nor ſhame: and when Alexander ſaid, *that he would be Diogenes, if he were not Alexander*, he ſhows that his deſire of diſtinguiſhing himſelf from the reſt of men carried him to diſtraction.

371. *Sure 'tis enough thoſe two bright orbs to view.* Anaxagoras, being aſked to what end he was born, anſwered, *To contemplate the ſun and moon.*

374. *While Epicure*, &c. Epicurus. called by Cicero *homo voluptuarius*, a voluptuary; by Seneca, *magiſter voluptatis*, the maſter of pleaſure; and Horace takes not this pleaſure for a ſpiritual joy, when he ſtiles himſelf *Epicuri de grege porcum*, a hog of Epicurus' herd.

382. *Makes with big words the portico reſound.* The famous portico of Athens, under which Zeno kept his ſchool. He made himſelf grow pale, becauſe the oracle had recommended to him to take the color of the dead.

386. *Ere yet the gout*, &c. The Stoics in their proud philoſophy made their ſage a man immovable. One of them in the ſharpeſt pains of the gout cried out: *Do what thou wilt, O pain, I ſhall not confeſs thee an evil.*

391. *He ventures nothing*, &c. Socrates and Plato have delivered admirable truths, but always with an air of douting. *Suum illud, nihil ut affirmet, tenet ad extremum.* 'His peculiarity of affirming nought he maintaineth to the laſt,' ſays Cicero of Socrates: and of Plato he ſays, *In Platonis libris nil affirmatur: in utramque partem multa diſſeruntur.* 'In Plato's books nothing is aſſerted; many things are diſcuſſed on both ſides.'

395. *Lo! his diſciple*, &c. Ariſtotle, after long being the diſciple of Plato, ſeparated from him, and commenced head of an oppoſite ſect. He pronounced his lectures walking in the Lyceum. It is not known what he thought about the immortality of the ſoul: which is the more ſurpriſing that he wrote upon the ſoul, and made treatiſes of morality.

402. *The myſtic calls me*, &c. Pythagoras who couched his principles under the vail of enigma's, enjoined his diſciples abſtinence and ſilence. His ſcheme of the metempſychoſis, or tranſmigration of ſouls is well known.

Omnia mutantur, nihil interit, errat & illinc
Huc venit, hinc illuc, & quoſlibet occupat artus

Spiritus, èque feris humana in corpora tranſit,
Inque feras noſter.
For all things are but chang'd, and nothing dies:
The ſpirit up and down at random flies.
Promiſcuouſly in various frames it burns;
From beaſts to men, from men to beaſts returns.

417. *Ariſto's ſon alone*, &c. Plato, ſon of Ariſto, was very ſenſible of the difficulty; and it was not his fault if he could not ſolve it. *Rem vidit, cauſam neſcivit.* 'He ſaw the thing, but was ignorant of the cauſe.' The reminiſcence which he imagined, or, the fancied remembrance that our ſouls have exiſted before our bodies, anſwers it not, any more than the famous ſyſtem of the two principles. Cicero in his Hortenſius cited by St. Auguſtine, came nearer the matter when he ſaid, 'that we are born 'to expiate ſome guilt contracted in a former life;' *ob aliqua ſcelera ſuſcepta in vita ſuperiore, pœnarum luendarum cauſâ nos eſſe natos*, But what had that life been? Bayle owns that there is no ſurmounting of this difficulty but by revelation. "Hiſtory, ſays he, is the recital of "the misfortunes and crimes of men. There is no city "without hoſpitals or gibbets, becauſe man is miſerable "and wicked. But why had the heathens nothing good "to ſay upon this matter? it is by revelation onely that "it can be unraveled."

429. *The Being ever bleſt*, &c. This is the great principle which St. Auguſtine repeats againſt Julian, to prove original ſin: *Sub deo juſto nemo miſer niſi miſereatur.* 'Under a juſt God none are wretched but ſuch as deſerve it.'

437. ——*I hear him own*, &c. "Unleſs," *ſays he in Phedo*, "a ſurer way be given us, ſuch as a divine "pro-

" promiſe or revelation; that upon it as upon a ſhip " ſecure from danger, we may happily finiſh the voyage " of our life."

444 *My heart is loſt*, &c. " I admire," *ſays Mr Paſcal*, " how any one can avoid deſpair in ſo miſerable " a ſtate:" a thought which a famous author pretends thus to refute. " When I ſee Paris or London, I ſee no " reaſon for falling into that deſpair M. Paſcal men- " tions. I there ſee men as happy as human nature can " bear.——It is no ſmall pride and raſhneſs to pretend " that by our nature we ſhould be better than we are." This I pretend, without therefore thinking myſelf either proud or raſh: and he who can conſole himſelf by the ſight of Paris and London, may well call ſuch objects of conſolation, *ſolatia luctûs exigua ingentis*; ' but ' puny ſoothers of enormous woe: or ſay *miſerable comforters are ye*. Whatever little ſweets we may find upon earth, we cannot but be conſcious that they are, as ſays St. Auguſtine, *ſolatia miſerorum*, but ſolaces of the wretched.

467. *And dwells ſuſpended on the doutful beam.* He is repreſented beholding a balance ſuſpended in the air, with this device, *Que ſais-je?* what do I know?

470. *For thee, vile author*, &c. Even thoſe who pretend to underſtand Spinoſa beſt, do not underſtand one another. Bayle more likely than any one elſe to catch his ſyſtem, after refuting his grand principle, that God is all, anſwers thoſe who accuſed him of refuting Spinoſa without comprehending him: " If I have not underſtood " the propoſition, it is not my fault. I would ſpeak " with leſs confidence, if I had wrote againſt the whole " ſyſtem

" ſyſtem of Spinoſa: it would have doubtleſs been more
" than once my fate not to underſtand what he means,
" and indeed there is not the ſmalleſt likelihood that he
" has well underſtood himſelf."

481. *Content with reaſon*, &c. It is Bayle himſelf who in the article of the Manichees, compares reaſon to the law of Moſes. " The law," *ſays he*, " according " to divines, was fit onely to make man conſcious of his " inability, the neceſſity of a redeemer and of a gra- " cious law: it was a ſchool-maſter to lead us to Jeſus " Chriſt. Much the ſame may we ſay of reaſon: it is " fit onely to make man conſcious of his darkneſs, his " inability, and the neceſſity of a revelation." This it has hitherto done, and is about to guide me farther in queſt of that revelation, by pointing me out the proofs of the true religion. It will conduct me even to him who cures our ails, of the greatneſs of which it has ſo well convinced me. This it could not do to the heathens. The moſt enlightened of them were alſo convinced by it of thoſe ſame maladies, and acknowleging that God was provoked againſt us, they could compare the puniſhment he made us ſuffer, by combining in us ſo much greatneſs and ſo much miſery, to nothing leſs than the puniſhment which Virgil's tyrant inflicted on thoſe who tied to dead bodies, pined with protracted death in funeral fire.

Mortua quin etiam jungebat corpora vivis,
Componens manibuſque manus atque oribus ora.
Tormenti genus! & ſanie taboque fluentes
Complexu in miſero longâ ſic morte necabat.

Such is the dreadful ſtate of man from ſin; ſuch that terrible yoke impoſed upon him, mentioned in the 40th chapter of Eccleſiaſticus. *Great travel is created for*

every

every man, and an heavy yoke is upon the ſons of Adam; from the day that they go out of their mother's womb, till the day that they return to the mother of all things, &c. The Pelagians who denied this original ſin, were forced to maintain that we were in the ſame ſtate in which God created us. St. Auguſtine, oppoſing to them the picture of man from his birth to his death, aſked them how an innocent creature could be born ſo wretched. " You " muſt," *ſaid he to them*, " accuſe God, either of in- " juſtice or inability." *Sed quia nec injuſtus, nec impotens eſt Deus, reſtat quòd grave jugum ſuper filios Adam non fuiſſet, niſi delicti originalis meritum præceſſiſſet*, ' but be- ' cauſe God is neither unjuſt nor unable, it remains that ' the heavy yoke had not faln upon the ſons of Adam, ' had it not been preceded by the demerit of original ' ſin.' To this ſin therefore reaſon recals us, and there- by evinces the neceſſity of revelation.

483. *Open thine eyes, ingrate, and know her right.* Whoever knows her fully, truſts not to her onely guidance. She is a light obſcured. *Obrutus quidam divinus ignis.* Her light and obſcurity have made her too much eſteem- ed by ſome, and too much deſpiſed by others. Hence thoſe ſects, ſo different from each other, of the Stoics, and Pyrrhonians, founded one upon our pride, the other upon our wretchedneſs: *Ut ſolum certum ſit, nihil eſſe certi, nec miſerius quicquam homine aut ſuperbius:* ' So ' that the onely thing certain is, that there is nothing ' certain, nor any thing more wretched or more proud ' than man,' ſaid Pliny the naturaliſt. Montagne who carried pyrrhoniſm ſo far as looking on his ſcales to ſay, *What do I know?* and not *I do not know*, becauſe he will not aſſert any thing, and douts even his own dout- ing, has no aim but to humble man. " Ignorance and " incu-

‘ incurioſity,’ ſays he, ‘ are two ſoft pillows for a ſound ‘ head.’ Bayle calls reaſon ‘ a principle of deſtruc- ‘ tion and not of edification, as miniſtering onely to ‘ doutfulneſs.’ And as he often contradicts himſelf, he has better than any other evidenced the weakneſs of man. The ancient Pyrrhonians were excuſable. Reaſon could do no better for them. But now that ſhe leads us to Religion, how ſhall we excuſe a Montagne or a Bayle? “ To exclude reaſon, and to admit onely reaſon,” *ſays M. Paſcal*, “ are exceſſes equally dangerous.” To believe every thing and to believe nothing are alſo extremes, which tho’ oppoſite, have one and the ſame ſource, want of examination. He who believes every thing, takes the ſmalleſt glare for a true light; he who douts of every thing, takes the ſmalleſt cloud for a real darkneſs.

NOTES:

UPON

CANTO III.

Verſe 5. *THY rebel ſons,* &c. As not the catholicity of the church, but the truth of the Chriſtian Religion is the object of this work, all ſects of Chriſtians are equally for me. I ſpeak at the end of Canto VI. of thoſe who have the misfortune to be ſeparated from us.

10. *With that of Muſulman,* &c. Muſulman ſignifies *true believer*, the title aſſumed by the followers of Mahomet.

13. *But Mecca's famous fugitive,* &c. It is pretended that Mahomet incenſed againſt Mecca his birth-place, whence he had been obliged to fly, choſe Medina for the place of his ſepulture. To Medina therefore his famous tomb draws the Muſulmans, who are bound to perform the pilgrimage once at leaſt in their life-time.

19. *Endited to the prophet by the dove.* Mahomet is ſaid to have put corn in his ear, and bred a pigeon to come and take it, to make believed that he was inſpired by

by a dove ſent to him from Heaven. I have quoted the fact from Grotius ; but as I would advance nothing but what is certain, I do not pretend to warrant it. Many learned men look upon this as a ſtory invented by the enemies of the Mahometans; and Reland in his treatiſe upon their religion refutes Grotius. However according to the paſſage of two Maronites cited by Bayle in the article of Mahomet, there are to be found in the territory of Mecca ſeveral pigeons held ſacred, and which none dare touch, becauſe they are believed the deſcendants of that which approached the ear of Mahomet. If the latter fact is true, it proves the former.

20. *Declares him but the ſecond from above.* Mahomet owns in the Koran, that Moſes was firſt ſent from heaven, and after Moſes came the Meſſiah, whom he calls the Word. He ſpeaks in manner following, according to the verſion of Du Ryer: " The Meſſiah Jeſus, the ſon " of Mary, is a prophet and apoſtle of God, his word and " his ſpirit. The Jews ſay they crucified him : ſurely " not him, but one like him. God rapt him up, and " he will be a witneſs againſt them at the day of judge- " ment." If this Jeſus is a prophet and apoſtle, then Mahomet can be neither.

26. *Both hemiſpheres with thy bleſt ardors burn.* I do not conceive how Bayle, in Mahomet's article, can advance that his religion is more extended than the Chriſtian. The point is not to compare the extent of the Mahometan countries with the extent of the Chriſtian ; but the number of perſons who believe in Mahomet with the believers in Jeſus Chriſt If we unite all the Chriſtian ſects, it is certain that the Chriſtians are in far greater number. The mahometans poſſeſs vaſt countries ; but

they never poſſeſs them alone. The Greek Church is very numerous: there are many Chriſtians among the Mahometans; but no Mahometans among the Chriſtians. *G. l. 2. tit.* 81.

35. *Man ſprung from nought*, &c. St. John, Rev. ch. 13. ſays that *the Lamb was ſlain from the foundation of the world:* which is true in ſeveral reſpects: 1. becauſe God had formed the eternal decree of the death and paſſion of Jeſus Chriſt; 2. becauſe the merits of his death have been applied to men from Adam to J. C. as they are from J. C. to the end of the world; 3. becauſe the ſacrifices of the patriarchs and prieſts of the old law were types of the ſacrifice of the ſavior of the world.

45. *In this bleſt book, by them with reverence ſeen.* "The book which diſhonors them," *ſays M. Paſcal*, "they preſerve at the expence of life: this is a ſincerity "which has no example in the world, nor its root in "nature."

46. *The very tale of words has ſacred been.* Nothing is more wonderful than the application and induſtry the Jews have ſhown to preſerve the law from any corruption that might have crept into it, whether by the ignorance of tranſcribers or the malice of enemies. They have for this purpoſe invented the Maſor, which they have ſtiled *the hedge of the law*, and which conſiſts 1. in marking with vocal points all the words, of which the uſe formerly aſcertained the reading; 2. in counting all the ſections, chapters, words and letters of every particular book, and of all the books together, of the law, and in marking the middle letter of the book, as in the laſt bible of Vander Hooght. Rabbi Joſeph of Crete, quoted by

by Buxtorf in his *Tiberias* writes: "Our maſters have "ſaid that there were in the law 600000 letters, accord- "ing to the number of Iſrael: but Rabbi Saadia aſſures "that there are about 800000. I attempt not to recon- "cile theſe differing computations. May God enlighten "our eyes by the coming of the Meſſiah. Amen." A noble motive of deſiring the Meſſiah! to learn the number of the letters of the law, inſtead of wiſhing to obtain from him the ſpirit of it.

53. *Without or cities*, &c. So ſays the prophet Hoſea, iii. 4. *For the children of Iſrael ſhall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a ſacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim.*

75. *While one poor race*, &c. Three things are remarkable about the Jews: 1. their great number, notwithſtanding the horrid ſlaughter made of them under the Roman emperors, and in various perſecutions they have undergone ſince; 2. their diſperſion, and continuance upon earth in defiance of the hatred of all nations; 3. their attachment to their law in ſpite of reaſon which tells them that the time of that law is paſt, and in ſpite even of their own natural propenſion. That people who under its prophets, under its kings, in the very ſight of its temple, was ever ready to embrace ſtrange religions, has remained ſince its deſtruction immovably attached to its own, in order to be a conſtant and living proof of ours. This attachment to their law is the cauſe of their multiplication; becauſe they always conſider celibacy as an accurſed ſtate: it is the cauſe why they have never mixed with other nations, ſince far from uniting with them by marriage, their obligation of eating onely

onely things prepared by themſelves prevents their having even a table-intercourſe with them. Every where therefore hated and deſpiſed, declared incapable of poſſeſſing immovable property, they are obliged to live by trade, conſequently to be diſperſed all over the world: and thus the prophecies are fulfilled.

93. *Curs'd be the man*, &c. This is the twelfth of the thirteen articles of their faith, drawn up by Rabbi Moſes, ſon of Maimon, the moſt reaſonable of the Rabbins: *Curſed be they who ſhall compute the time of the Meſſiah.*

110. *Wrapt in the darkening vail*, &c. This vail prefigured by that of Moſes, has remained upon the eyes of the Jews to this day. We ſtill ſay with St Paul. 2 Cor. iii. 15. *Even unto this day the vail is upon their heart.*

129. *Man heard*, &c. *It ſhall bruiſe thy head*, &c. The meaning of theſe words muſt be prophetical. Thus in the ſame moment in which God pronounces to men their ſentence of condemnation, he gives them to hope a deliverer.

136. *To Plato and to me*, &c. Why upon earth ſo many beauties and imperfections? Why in man ſo much greatneſs and miſery? Why in God ſo much anger and love? Reaſon unable to ſolve the paradox, choſe rather formerly to admit two principles, one good, the other bad, than to admit but one ſo contrary to itſelf. Revelation teaches us that the contrarieties are not in the artificer, nor even in the work, but thro' the change which ſin has cauſed in it. The ſubverted ſtructure ſhews at once its greatneſs and its ruin.

140. *A myſt'ry*, &c. "Man," *ſays M. Paſcal, ſpeaking of original ſin*, "is more inconceivable without this myſtery, than the myſtery is inconceivable to man."

141. *The knot unties*, &c. All this preſuppoſes what is ſaid in the end of the ſecond Canto.

154. *Spring daughters*, &c. Geneſis ſhows their birth long before the flood. Lucretius proves the world not eternal, by the riſe of arts.

171. *A flowing fountain*, &c. It is certain that the ancients knew onely hand-mills. An old greek epigram makes it judged that water-mills were known in the time of Auguſtus; yet it does not appear that the Romans made any uſe of them. Wind-mills were unknown till very late.

189. *But one finds grate*, &c. Beroſus, a profane hiſtorian, cited by Joſephus againſt Appion, ſpeaks of the general deluge in the terms of Moſes. Abydenus, another hiſtorian quoted by Euſebius, relates the ſtory of the ark which ſaved man and beaſt from the flood. Plutarch mentions the dove that came out of the ark, and brought back tokens of the fair weather's return. This paſſage of Plutarch is in his treatiſe: *Whether terreſtrial be more ſagacious than aquatic animals.* Lucian in his treatiſe of the Syrian Goddeſs, touches alſo on the ſtory of the ark. So many authorities drawn from the heathens ought to confound thoſe witlings who preſume to ſcoff at eminent facts of which they never fathomed the proofs. But their ſcoffs can ſeduce only thoſe who, like them-

themſelves, have ignorance for the baſe of their underſtanding.

193. *By death he now muſt live*, &c. The 29th verſe of the firſt chapter of Geneſis has always made it believed that before the deluge, God had not permitted men to eat the fleſh of beaſts, and that the faithful abſtained from it: which agrees to what the poets ſay, that in the golden age, fruits were the onely food.

202. *Mild Rhea's empire*, &c.

Aurea prima ſata eſt ætas, quæ vindice nullo
Sponte ſuâ ſine lege, fidem rectumque colebat:
Pœna metuſque aberant. OVID.

Firſt ſprung the golden age, which without aw
Of dire avenger or the dread of law,
Pure faith and right ſpontaneouſly obey'd,
Ere while by pain and terror undiſmay'd.

209. *Then tardy Death*, &c. Several ancient hiſtorians, cited by Joſephus, atteſt the long duration of the life of the firſt men. Holy writ, hiſtory, and the poets ſay the ſame thing.

220. *Truth, fiction, phyſics*, &c. The univerſal deluge is atteſted by a great number of heathen writers. The memory of it has been preſerved in almoſt all nations, even in America. Nature gives daily proofs of it, according to the words of M. de Fontenelle in the eulogy of M. Leibnitz. "Shells petrified in lands, ſtones im-"preſſed with the figure of fiſhes, and plants not of "the country, are inconteſtable medals of this deluge."

222. *Which*

222. *Which Fable ſeems to ape*, &c. Some learned men have choſen to account for this conformity by allowing the heathens an acquaintance with the books of Moſes. But it ſuffices that the memory of ſo conſiderable events has ever remained among men.

262. *Thus from yon ſtar*, &c. According to Plato and Diodorus Siculus, idolatry began with the worſhip of the ſtars: next to the ſtars, adoration was paid to the authors of arts, to kings, to conquerors, to uſeful or noxious animals, to ſome out of gratitude, to others out of fear. According to the author of the book of wiſdom, idolatry aroſe in ſculpture, which revived to a father his ſon. The author of the hiſtory of the heavens carries idolatry back, by a learned and ingenious ſyſtem, to the ſymbolical writing of the Egyptians. It is highly probable that idolatry has had different origins in different nations.

268. *At her Oſiris' feet*, &c. Oſiris, by the common opinion, made the Egyptians acquainted with various arts, which gained him adoration after his death. The author of the hiſtory of the heavens explains otherwiſe the origin of Oſiris, Iſis, and of dog-faced Anubis, who is therefore called by Virgil, *Latrator Anubis*, 'the 'howling Anubis.' Without examining the different ſentiments, it ſuffices to deplore the human mind's extravagance, of which thoſe deities are irrefragable proofs.

276. *In form aſſwages barb'rous Moloch's ire.* Moloch the deity of the Ammonites to whom children were ſacrificed. Almoſt all nations have offered human vic-

tims; which made St Auguſtine ſay: 'What mad aber-
'ration of mind! to think that barbarities of which men
'are incapable in their rage, ſhould reduce the gods to
'mitigation.' *Tantus eſt perturbatæ mentis & ſedibus ſuis pulſæ furor, ut ſic dii placentur, quemadmodum ne homines quidem ſæviunt.*

280. *Chemoſh*, &c. A Moabitiſh deity, whoſe worſhip was very favorable to pleaſure, and to whom Solomon, ſeduced by women, cauſed a temple to be erected upon a mountain near Jeruſalem.

285. *Each year reminds to mourn the lovely youth.* A famous feaſt at Tyre and Sidon. Idolatry was communicated from the Egyptians to the Phenicians, from theſe to the Greeks, and from the Greeks to all other nations. The feaſts of Adonis which were ſpent in mourning, made Cicero ſay: *Quid abſurdius quàm homines morte delectos reponere in Deos, quorum omnis cultus eſſet futurus in luctu?* 'What can be more abſurd, than men ſwallow-
'ed up in death to repoſit among the Gods, and ſuch
'too whoſe whole worſhip ſhould conſiſt in mourning?'

296. *Shall laviſh without end celeſtial reign.* "What "a fool is man!" *cries Montagne*, "he cannot forge a "hand-worm, but he forges gods by dozens." Pliny pitied man for ſuffering himſelf to be governed by his own fictions. *Quid infelicius homine, cui ſua figmenta dominantur.*

307. *In Afric's ſands*, &c. The famous temple of Jupiter Ammon to which Alexander needs would repair.

Cato

Cato paſſing near that temple would not enter it, becauſe he knew, ſays Lucan,

Steriles nec legit arenas
Ut caneret paucis, merſitque hoc pulvere verum.

——' That Heaven ne'er choſe ſuch barren ſands
' To chant to ſtraggling fools its dread commands.'

308. *Or to Dodona let us hy*, &c. Dodona's oaks were famous as well as the doves of that foreſt, which are ſaid alſo to have foretold futurity. Whither have men not ſtrayed in queſt of that knowlege, which they are ſo much happier never to find? as Lucan ſays:

Sit cæca futuri
Mens hominum fati: liceat ſperare timenti.

Be human ſpirits blind to future fate:
If fear depreſs them, ſtill let hope elate.

321. *To humble Hebrews God vouchſafes his ray.* At the ſame time that Tacitus ſpeaks of the Jews with ſoverain contempt, he aſcribes to them the higheſt notions of the Deity that can be conceived. Where could that ignorant people have got them? We have ſeen all other nations in the darkneſs of idolatry, and among them philoſophers divided by contending ſyſtems; among the Jews the truth of one God preſerved; no philoſophers, but prophets of whom we are about to ſpeak, who far from being divided amongſt themſelves, bear mutual teſtimony, authoriſe each other, and never have in view but one and the ſame object.

325. *Obedient Nature*, &c. Miracles are extraordinary events, which the train of natural laws cannot produce. In this they are to us the language of God; becauſe the

train of natural laws cannot be interrupted but by him alone who eſtabliſhed thoſe laws. Spinoſa defines a miracle, an uncommon event, produced by laws of nature, that are unknown to us: as if it were harder for God to diſarrange laws he has eſtabliſhed, than to maintain the conſtant execution of them. Whether he multiply five loaves to feed five thouſand men, it is an effect he operates by himſelf alone, and by a particular volition; and as it is extraordinary, we call it a *miracle:* or whether he multiply grain by the concurrence of the earth, the ſun, the ſhowers, *&c.* it is an effect he produces by a general volition, and by ſecond cauſes: but what chain of ſecond cauſes, with links correſpondent from the beginning of the world! Thoſe effects do not ſurpriſe us becauſe our eyes are accuſtomed to them: therefore when God was pleaſed to awaken us, he operated the extraordinary effects which we call *miracles.*

345. *Wand'ring in ſkinny coats,* &c. Elijah was clothed with ſkins: Iſaiah wore a ſack-cloth: Obadiah carried nothing but bread and water to the prophets who lived in caves: Eliſha refuſed the preſents of Naaman. Such men ſought not the advantages of this life, tho' under a law which ſeemed to promiſe no other. They ſtrove to pleaſe neither people, nor princes. What difference between ſuch prophets, and thoſe who among the Greeks preſuming to take the ſame name, inhabited the temple of Delphi! Their attention to make their court to the moſt potent princes had occaſioned the ſaying, that *Apollo philippiſed*; becauſe his oracles were always favorable to Philip.

377. *Could to their eyes thoſe diff'rent ſcenes diſcloſe.* Is it natural to ſee always the ſame object in two oppoſite points

points of view? And yet thus it is that all the prophets contemplate Jeſus Chriſt. When Moſes and Elias are with him on mount Tabor, tho' they ſee him refulgent as the ſun, they talk with him of his death and his ſufferings.

404. *The ſelf-ſame captive*, &c. *And after threeſcore and two weeks ſhall the Meſſiah be cut off, but not for himſelf: and the people of the prince that ſhall come, ſhall deſtroy the city and the ſanctuary, and the end thereof ſhall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war deſolations are determined.* Dan. ix. 26. Theſe prophecies of Daniel are ſo clear, that Porphyry fancied them ſpurious. "If "with Daniel you compare," *ſays Abadie*, "Livy, "Juſtin and Polybius, you will dout whether the pro- "phet deſerve not as well as they the title of hiſto- "rian."

445. *A prophet people*, &c. St. Auguſtine ſpeaking of the patriarchs, ſays 'not onely their lips were prophe- 'tical, but even their whole life was ſo.' *Illorum non tantum lingua, ſed & vita prophetica fuit.* Tertullian ſaid in like manner, *Ut verbis, ita & rebus prophetatum.* 'As in words, ſo in things too they propheſied.' Of ſo many figures I quote but ſome of the moſt illuſtrious; as Iſaac, Joſeph, the braſen ſerpent, the paſchal lamb, the cities of refuge, whence there was no iſſue but at the death of the high-prieſt, and laſt of all Jonah. The celebrated biſhop of Rocheſter, who died at Paris ſome years ago, meditated a work upon the Chriſtian religion, which he meant to prove by types. Indeed a man who ſhould maintain that the reſemblance obſervable in the events befaln ſo many different perſons, is there obſer-

vable onely by chance, and has no relation to Jeſus Chriſt, would diſcover no more ſenſe than he who ſeeing ſeveral pictures of the King done by ſeveral hands ſhould maintain, that none of the painters deſigned to repreſent the King, and that all thoſe pictures reſemble him but by chance.

NOTES:

NOTES:

UPON

CANTO IV.

Verſe 1. *THE cruſh of empires*, &c. When we conſider with M. Boſſuet, all the events of the world in this point of view, univerſal hiſtory becomes the hiſtory of Religion. "All "empires," *ſays he*, "have concurred to the good of "that religion, and the glory of God, who hath made "uſe of them to chaſtiſe or exerciſe, to extend or pro-"tect his people.

19. *Be Sannaſar's*, &c. I have ſpoke in my preface of the abuſe Sannaſarius made of fiction in his poem *de partu virginis*.

25. *Ere yet Religion's venerable ty*, &c. Polybius and Plutarch acknowleged themſelves that the progreſs of the Romans was not the effect of a blind fortune, but of a divine providence. They could not know what was the deſign of that providence. M. Boſſuet makes us obſerve it, and Origen had before him made the ſame reflection upon that univerſal empire in the time of Jeſus Chriſt. The commerce of ſo many nations before

ſtranger

ſtrangers to each other, and afterwards united under the Roman dominion, was one of the moſt powerful means uſed by God to haſten the progreſs of the goſpel.

39. *In her bold ſhips*, &c. Antony who was routed with Cleopatra in the battle of Actium, had collected the forces of the Eaſt.

Victor ab auroræ populis & littore rubro
Ægyptum, viresque Orientis, & ultima ſecum
Bactra trahit. Æneid. 7.

44. *To Rome*, &c. This is the magnificent triumph ſung by Virgil.

Incedunt victæ longo ordine gentes
Quàm variæ linguis, habitu tam veſtis & armis.
Hic Nomadum genus, & diſcinctos Mulciber Afros;
Hic Lelegas, Caraſque, ſagittiferoſque Gelonos
Finxerat. Euphrates ibat jam mollior undis,
Extremique hominum Morini, Rhenuſque bicornis,
Indomitique Dahæ, & pontem indignatus Araxes.
Lib. 8.

55. *Auguſtus, peaceful Lord*, &c. This general peace of the earth under Auguſtus is deſcribed by the ſame poet.

Claudentur belli portæ; Furor impius intùs
Sæva ſedens ſuper arma & centum vinctus ahenis
Poſt tergum nodis, fremet horridus ore cruento.

By Horace alſo:

Tutus bos enim rura perambulat:
Nutrit rura Ceres, almaque fauſtitas:
Pacatum volitant per mare navitæ.

The

The fearleſs ox the country ſcours,
Where Ceres gladding plenty pours.
The ſailors ſkim the peaceful main.

and by Velleius Paterculus. *Finita bella civilia, ſepulta externa, reverſa pax, ſopitus ubique armorum furor,——rediit cultus agris, ſacris honos, ſecuritas hominibus,*—&c. "The civil wars ended, the forain buried, the mad-"ding din of arms huſh'd around, with returning peace "returned culture to the lands, honor to things ſacred, "ſecurity to men," *&c.*

69. *An age*, &c. I pretend not to aſcribe directly to the Meſſiah, as ſome have done, this eclogue of Virgil; but neither is it likely that for Pollio, Marcellus, or Druſus, the poet would have ſoared to ſuch a ſtrain. Virgil, as remarked by Servius, full of the grandeur of Auguſtus, ſwells into enthuſiaſm, and recollects the predictions of the Sibyls: *Cumæi carminis.* 'the Cumean ſong.' Thoſe predictions *of a maſter who ſhould come from the Eaſt to renew all things*, are related in Suetonius and Tacitus. Joſephus applied them to Veſpaſian. What Suetonius ſays is this: *Percrebuerat Oriente toto vetus & conſtans opinio eſſe in fatis ut Judææ profecti rerum potirentur.* "An old and ſettled opinion had "overſpread the Eaſt, of its being decree'd in fate that "the ſprung from Judea ſhould poſſeſs the world." And Tacitus is quite conformable: *Pluribus perſuaſio inerat, antiquis ſacerdotum libris contineri, eo ipſo tempore fore, ut valeſceret Oriens, profectique Judææ rerum potirentur.* 'Many had the perſwaſion of its being couch-'ed in the ancient books of the prieſts, that at that pre-'ciſe period the Eaſt ſhould increaſe in ſtrength, and 'that the ſprung from Judea ſhould poſſeſs the world.'

81. *Fair Salem rouſes, &c.* The Jews were ſo perſwaded, that the time of the Meſſiah was come, that ſome of them took Herod for the Meſſiah. Thus at the ſame time that they look for the great event foretold by their prophets, the Romans on their part expect an important change, which according to their Sibyls, is to happen upon the earth; and in this general expectation Jeſus Chriſt appears.

99. *But lo! effulges, &c.* The Miracles of Jeſus Chriſt are acknowleged by Celſus, and by Julian the apoſtate, who exclaims: "What has he done ſo conſi-"derable upon earth? unleſs it be regarded a mighty "marvel to open the eyes of the blind, to heal the "ſick, *&c.*"

102. *And giving, as her lord, &c.* Not onely does Nature obey when he ſpeaks to her, but when he makes her ſpeak by his ſervants. He ſends forth his apoſtles to preach the goſpel, ſaying to them, *Go, heal the ſick, raiſe the dead*:—As a maſter commiſſions he his miniſters.

115. *A brother rous'd, &c.* Spinoſa, according to Bayle in his article, ſaid, that if he could have perſwaded himſelf of the reſurrection of Lazarus, he would have torn his ſyſtem and turned Chriſtian. Spinoſa therefore believed himſelf maſter of his own heart to change it as he pleaſed. Lazarus's reſurrection redoubled the hatred of the enemies of Jeſus Chriſt, and haſtened on his death. The Jews ſaw and believed not, and Jeſus Chriſt told them the reaſon: *Ye believe not, becauſe ye are not of my ſheep*. St. John x. 26.

117. *He*

117. *He bids no flood toward its ſource rebound.* I have ſaid in the third canto that God had, in favor of the Jews, inverted the order of the elements. The parting ſea and ſtopping ſun are miracles, which appear more glorious than thoſe of Jeſus Chriſt. When they aſk him ſigns from heaven, he ſhows none. Not that he is not lord of nature: when he dies, *darkneſs ſhall be over all the land*; but during his lifetime, *he went about doing good.* He rewards the faith of his attendants, works miracles of goodneſs in their behalf, and foretels that they who believe in him, *ſhall do greater things than theſe.*

139. *Their murmur's vain,* &c. The proof of this is in the ſixth chapter of St. John. When he aſſures that we muſt eat his fleſh and drink his blood, many of his diſciples forſake him murmuring, that, *This is a hard ſaying.* He then retires toward his apoſtles: *And you,* ſays he to them, *will ye alſo go away?* Let the deiſt account for this indifference in the founder of a religion about attracting followers.

146. *Expanded,* &c. A famous paſſage of Plato applied to Jeſus Chriſt by Grotius and the biſhop of Meaux. Cicero and Seneca have both tranſlated it. The latter by theſe words *extendenda per patibulum manus,* marks clearly the puniſhment of the croſs. The Greek word in Plato denotes a ſervile puniſhment, in which the malefactor was bound to a ſtake.

152. *To Tiber's ſhores the doleful tale reſounds.* The great events that happened in Judea, were ſoon known at Rome. Auguſtus, as related by Macrobius, learning

that Herod had put to death all the children under two years old, and not even ſpared his own, ſaid that he would rather be Herod's hog than his ſon. Tiberius, as Tertullian tells us, propoſed to the ſenate to receive Jeſus Chriſt in the number of the Gods. Calcidius a platonic philoſopher mentions a ſtar, *which announced*, ſaid he, *not woes, but the birth of a God.* Phlego quoted by Euſebius, Origen, and St. Jerom, ſpeaks of an eclipſe, the greateſt that ever had been ſeen, and which overſpread the earth with darkneſs. *Eum mundi caſum relatum in arcanis veſtris habetis.* 'That wonderful 'event ye have recorded in your archives,' ſaid Tertullian to the Romans.

169. *He lives*, &c. Not ſatisfied with atteſting this truth, they ſeal it with their blood. It is but too common to forget after their death even thoſe one has loved the moſt tenderly. The apoſtles abandoned and renounced their maſter while he was alive; they dy for him when he is crucified: they have therefore ſeen him riſen. This reflection is St. Chryſoſtom's.

174. *Recount their failings*, &c. Thoſe weakneſſes confirm the teſtimonies which the apoſtles afterwards bore, as remarks Mr. Foſter againſt Tindal, whoſe book has been refuted by ſeveral learned men, among the reſt, by the late biſhop of London, who at the beginning of his paſtoral letters, complains that his 'dioceſe is the 'center of attacks upon religion, whence they diverge 'around.'

175. *From their own mouths I learn their humble birth.* Who obliged them to tell us that they were fiſhers; that in the garden of olives, they could not watch one

hour with their maſter overwhelmed with ſorrow, and that they all took flight when they perceived his danger? why inform us that St. Peter denied him thrice?

179. *At ſight of death*, &c. Mr. Paſcal is perhaps the firſt that has taken notice of this admirable ſimplicity of the evangeliſts. They never ſpeak in injurious terms of Chriſt's enemies, his executioners, or his judges. They narrate the matters of fact, without adding any reflection. They ſet forth neither the meekneſs of their maſter when he receives a blow, nor his conſtancy in ſuffering, of which all they ſay is, *and they crucified him.* The triumph of his aſcenſion ſeems neceſſarily to conclude the hiſtory in a glorious manner. Two evangeliſts mention it not; the other two ſay onely, *After the Lord had ſpoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and ſat on the right hand of God.* St. Mark xvi. 51. *And it came to paſs, while he bleſſed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.* St. Luke xxiv. 51. This character of ſimplicity and indifference about drawing the attention of the readers, is common to them with no other writer, and is common to them all four, altho' they wrote at different times and places.

184. *A Socrates could cruſh her ſmalleſt groans.* The intrepidity of Socrates before his judges is ſupported by the pride of his virtue. He makes bold to tell them that nothing ſhall hinder him from inſtructing publicly, becauſe it is the will of heaven. What proofs gives he of his miſſion, and of that genius which he pretends to have been attached to him from his infancy? He concludes his apology by declaring himſelf worthy to be maintained at the expence of the republic, and by his boldneſs provokes the judges, who condemn him to death. Jeſus

Chriſt

Chriſt who keeps ſilence before his judges, and even unto death, is not come to ſet the example of human conſtancy, but of human obedience: *As a lamb before her ſhearers is dumb, ſo he openeth not his mouth.*

195. *How juſtly then that hiſt'ry we revere.* The Jews own that they put to death Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe miracles are atteſted by the Talmud. Why kept they ſilence when the goſpel appeared? A hiſtory which diſhonors a nation, and is not contradicted by it; a hiſtory written by four eye-witneſſes, who ſeal it with their blood, muſt be a hiſtory irrefragably true.

202. *And thou wert ne'er more zealous for his law.* Their celebrated ambaſſy to Caligula is a proof of it. They dared to withſtand ſo terrible a prince, who wanted to erect his ſtatue in the ſanctuary of their temple. This people formerly ſo prone to idolatry was then moſt zealous for its law, as it is even at this day.

203. *What hideous harbingers,* &c. The paſſage of Tacitus is remarkable. *Viſæ per cœlum concurrere acies, rutilantia arma, & ſubito igne nubium collucere templum: expanſæ repentè delubri fores, & audita major humanâ vox excedere deos: ſimul ingens motus excedentium.* 'In 'heaven were ſeen embattled hoſts, gleaming arms; and 'flaſhes from the clouds made all the temple ſhine: 'the idol-temple's doors ſuddenly burſt open, and a 'voice more than human was heard, that the gods de-'parted; a great motion withal of the departing.'

208. *Jerus'lem is no more,* &c. Nor have they ever been able to rear it again. This they attempted under Julian the apoſtate; but were repulſed by flames which burned

burned men and ſtones. This fact is unqueſtionable, as related by a heathen hiſtorian, and objected more than once by St. Chryſoſtom to the Jews.

209. *Not I, ſaid Titus*, &c. Titus, after his victory, by the account of Joſephus himſelf, whoſe great aim is to make his court to him, would not receive the crowns or congratulations, becauſe he was conſcious that he had been but the miniſter of the divine vengeance.

216. *The Lord provok'd has lopt the faithleſs boughs.* Thus that people the depoſitary of revelation, with whom God has made a covenant, to whom he has ſent his prophets and his ſon; that people whence ſprung the apoſtles, is diſperſed to this day, and preſents itſelf to us in all places, in order to remind us of thoſe words of St. Paul: *Be not high minded, but fear. For if God ſpared not the natural branches, take heed leſt he alſo ſpare not thee.* Rom. xi. 20, 21.

223. *How teems the parent of the new-born race!* This is none of thoſe enumerations ſwelled by a poetical fancy. It will be found more conſiderable in Grotius's treatiſe *Of the truth of the Chriſtian religion* under the title *Of its wonderful propagation.*

To the triumph of Faith may well be applied Virgil's verſes upon the triumph of Auguſtus.

——*Incedunt victæ longo ordine gentes*
Quàm variæ linguis, habitu tam veſtis, &c.

The vanquiſh'd tribes extend the ſolemn train,
In dialect as various as in dreſs, *&c.*

Tertullian

Tertullian in the ſecond century aſſerted, that the empire of Jeſus Chriſt was more extended than had been Alexander's, or that of the Romans. St. Juſtin reckons numberleſs nations in the church. St. Ireneus makes a catalogue of them ſtill more numerous. A hundred years after, Origen and Arnobius ſay that chriſtianity is diffuſed wherever the ſun has born his beams.

134. *Th' indocil Sarmat*, &c. It has been obſerved upon this verſe that the Poles, who are the Sarmatians of Europe, received not the goſpel till the tenth century: which is true of the nation in general; but tho' it received not the goſpel, any more than Great Britain till long after Jeſus Chriſt, there were Chriſtians amongſt all thoſe nations as early as the ſecond century; and I advance nothing but upon the authority of Tertullian, who names the Sarmatians, the Britons, the Scythians, *&c.* His words are theſe: *Britannorum inacceſſæ Romanis loca, Chriſto verò ſubdita, & Sarmatarum, & Dacorum, & Germanorum, & Scytharum, & abditaram multarum gentium, & provinciarum, & inſularum nobis incognitarum, in quibus Chriſti nomen regnat.* 'Places 'of the Britons acceſsleſs to the Romans, but ſubject to 'Chriſt, and of the Sarmatians, Dacians, Germans, 'Scythians, and many obſcure nations and provinces, 'and iles to us unknown, in which the name of Chriſt 'reigns.'

236. *Fam'd Corinth rouſes*, &c. St. Paul's epiſtles to the Corinthians, Romans, Galatians, Epheſians, evince the numerous ſocieties of Chriſtians that were already in thoſe cities.

cities. The progreſs of the goſpel was as wonderful in its rapidity as in its extent.

237. *Learn'd Athens opes her eyes*, &c. *The God whom ye ignorantly worſhip, him declare I unto you*, ſays St. Paul in the Areopagus, on account of an altar which he had found at Athens, inſcribed *To the unknown God*. Pauſanias, Philoſtratus, Lucian, have all mentioned this altar.

244. *To bloody gods*, &c. The druids who were the prieſts of the ancient Gauls, offered human victims to the Gods. *Hominum fibris conſulere deos fas habebant*. Tac. Ann. 14.

249. *Thy glorious martyrs*, &c. St. Pothin and St. Ireneus, ſucceſſors to the diſciples of the apoſtles, founded the church of Lyons. The number of martyrs was ſo great, that the public places were full of dead bodies, and the two rivers ſeemed to run with blood.

265. *To the great name*, &c. It was not Jeſus Chriſt himſelf who was to convert the gentiles: he came not but for the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael. But his name publiſhed by his apoſtles converted the nations, as Iſaiah had foretold, in his 66th chapter.

267. *The croſs has conquer'd all*, &c. The law, the prophets, every thing had prepared the Jews to receive their expected Meſſiah. They ſaw, they heard, they rejected him. Nothing had prepared the gentiles, who had heard neither of Moſes nor of the prophets, who expected not Jeſus Chriſt, who neither ſaw nor heard him, and yet embraced his religion, preached by his apoſtles. That which had been foretold was accompliſhed.

281. *The burning lights as living flambows burn.* The barbarous puniſhments inflicted upon the Chriſtians, are thus deſcribed by Tacitus: *Pereuntibus addita ludibria, ut ferarum tergis contecti, laniatu canum interirent, aut crucibus affixi, aut inflammandi, atque ubi defeciſſet dies, in uſum nocturni luminis urerentur.* 'Their deaths were 'made public ſports: clothed with the ſkins of wild 'beaſts, they were expoſed to be torn by dogs, or were 'made to pine away upon croſſes, or bedaubed with 'inflammatory matter, that when the day failed, they 'might burn as torches in the night.'

293. *In queſt of death their genius they employ.* Some have pretended to oppoſe the example of *Fanatics* to this thought of Mr. Paſcal, "I believe witneſſes who "can face death." The compariſon cannot be juſt. Fanatics maintain not a matter of fact, but opinions with which they are madly poſſeſſed. Witneſſes depoſe upon a fact they have ſeen. But a fact is not maintained by enthuſiaſm or imagination: thus Mr. Paſcal's thought is exactly juſt.

300. *When Peregrine,* &c. A cynic philoſopher, who after being ſome time a Chriſtian, burned himſelf out of vanity at the olympic games.

311. *Mad victim,* &c. Bernier, a very faithful traveller aſſures that he has been ſpectator to one of thoſe dreadful ceremonies.

318. *Yes, whom with choiceſt gifts,* &c. I ſhall ſoon ſpeak of their miracles; I mean here onely their ſupernatural

pernatural gifts, and their power over evil ſpirits. They cannot be in error, ſince they expel the prince of falſehood. With regard to ſupernatural gifts, ſuch as ſpeaking divers tongues, interpreting them, propheſying, *&c.* they were ſo common and ſo public, that St. Paul, 2 Cor. ch. 12. makes a long enumeration of them. Would he have wrote thus to a whole church, if the facts had not been certain?

324. *From frames he tortur'd flies amaz'd away.* In the very ſight of the heathens, as Tertullian tells them, *de corporibus noſtro imperio excedunt inviti & dolentes, & vobis præſentibus.* 'Out of bodies at our command 'they depart reluctant and plaintive, in your very pre-'ſence.' A man talks not in ſuch terms to his enemies of a fact rare or doutful.

331. *Thoſe days were paſt*, &c. The taſte of philoſophy had ſpread itſelf abroad. Platoniſm was the prevailing ſyſtem. It cannot be ſaid that Chriſtianity has been eſtabliſhed by the aid of ignorance. Tho' the apoſtles ſeem ſimple and unpoliſhed, let us not fancy that they perſwaded men ſimple and unpoliſhed as themſelves. God has been pleaſed to confound human wiſdom by men in whom that wiſdom ſhould ſhine, neither by wit nor ſcience, But this miracle accompliſhed, how many illuſtrious ſpirits ſubmitting to the Chriſtian religion, become the defenders of it! We ſee in the three firſt centuries a Cyprian, a Tertullian, an Origen, an Arnobius, and a Lactantius; in the two following an Athanaſius, a Baſil, a Gregory Nazianzen, a Chryſoſtom, a Euſebius, a Jerom, an Ambroſe, a Cyril, and in fine an Auguſtine, one of thoſe rare and vaſt geniuſes, that muſt be the admiration of all ages.

345. *He who can only ſneer*, &c. It is eaſy to ſneer at that which, according to St. Paul, is folly in the eyes of men. Let thoſe pretenders to wit, who think to make a home thruſt at religion by a ſneer, *telum imbelle ſine ictu*, 'a feeble ſhaft, which woundeth not;' let thoſe vain witlings reflect, that it is her glory never to have been attacked more ſolidly. Celſus, Porphyry, and Julian the apoſtate, in ſpite of their virulence againſt her, in ſpite of their wit and their learning, have been able to attack her with no better arms.

359. *Of panting camps*, &c. Tertullian twice refers the heathens to the letter of Marcus Aurelius concerning that miracle, which Claudian aſcribes to enchanters, *&c. vis ibi nulla ducum, &c.* 'There ſhone no power of chiefs,' *&c.* It may be objected that every religion and nation pretends to miracles, becauſe, as ſays Livy, *Motis in religionem animis multa nunciata, multa temere credita.* 'By minds religiouſly (or rather enthuſiaſtically) moved, many things are told, many raſhly credited.' But this cannot be applied to thoſe of the Chriſtians. Not to mention that of the fulminating legion, which is equally certain, even tho' the ſurname of *fulminating*, given to that legion were anterior, what a long train of miracles atteſted by eye-witneſſes, and thoſe incapable of falſehood! Beſides thoſe miracles are always proofs of the goodneſs of God to the diſtreſſed, as the healing of diſeaſes, *&c.* Whereas thoſe which profane hiſtorians relate, are either ridiculouſly uſeleſs, which proves their falſity, as when they tell that a ſoothſayer cut a flint in two with a raſor; that a veſtal drew water with a pierced ſieve, *&c.* or were reputed prodigies onely thro' ignorance of natural cauſes, as the ſhowers of blood which our naturaliſt now can account for, and all thoſe appearances in hea-

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ven, which were no other than the northern lights, very naturally apt to terrify a people who has no knowlege of them.

388. *Apollo ſilenc'd, ev'ry God is mute.* It is certain that all the oracles ceaſed ſome time after Jeſus Chriſt, and Plutarch has enquir'd into the cauſe. But ſhould we ſay that Jeſus Chriſt ſilenced them at his birth, ſince this ſilence did not happen all at once? In order to reconcile the two opinions, I think it may be ſaid that Jeſus Chriſt did actually ſilence the demons; but that the prieſts ſupplied this ſilence by their own impoſtures, till at laſt tiring of a character which loſes all credit when detected, the oracles ceaſed entirely.

393. *Rome long oppoſes this o'erpow'ring flood.* It was not the authority of the emperors that made paganiſm fall, as Jurieu has pretended. Rome long maintained her gods: but the fall of Rome involved in it that of paganiſm.

411. *What means the horrid Hun? what ſeeks the Goth?* &c. Alaric king of the Goths ſacked Rome in 405. Genſeric king of the Vandals took it again, in 445, and gave it up to pillage. Attila king of the Huns, who ſtiled himſelf the ſcourge of God, ravaged in 452 ſeveral cities of Italy. He went to Rome; but the ſupplications of Pope Leo ſtopped him. Odoacer king of the Herulians completed in 476 the deſtruction of the Roman empire in Italy.

437. *At length th' apoſtles arms of ſleep forſake. But* Peter, *and they that were with him, were heavy with ſleep: and when they were awake, they ſaw his glory, and the*

two

two men that ſtood with him. Until the death of Jeſus Chriſt, his church repreſented by the apoſtles, is as it were aſleep. The apoſtles, after the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt knew and confeſſed all the majeſty of their maſter; and the awakening of their faith produced to religion the teſtimony of ſo many martyrs, whoſe voice bears concert with that which was heard upon mount Tabor, *Hear him.* But after hearing this voice, after ſeeing the transfiguration, and ſo many miracles, why had the apoſtles ſo long a languid faith? God permitted it, in order to ſtrengthen ours. They were ſlow to believe, that we might not be ſo.

NOTES

NOTES:

UPON

CANTO V.

Verſe 10. *CANST trace the winds? then tell me how they blow.—The wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou hearеſt the ſound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth.* St. John iii. 8.

23. *What, cries the deiſt, chain our reaſon down!* Thoſe who oppoſe to the myſteries the reluctance of reaſon, do not conſider that the certainty of a truth procedes from its demonſtration, and not from the conſent of our reaſon. Now every revealed truth is demonſtrated: its revelation is its demonſtration: and every truth which has a demonſtration, has as much certainty as it ought to have. This is the principle which Locke lays down in his third reply to Stillingfleet. 'The faithfulneſs of God is a demonſtration to whatever he reveal-'eth, and the want of another demonſtration (to wit 'that which reaſon might add) rendereth not a demon-'ſtrated propoſition doutful.'

40. *And*

35. *Till the ſet day, th' important book is ſeal'd. — The words are cloſed up and ſealed till the time of the end.* Dan. xii. 9.

40. *And ſtill the book ſeems opening to the view.* Solomon who had received ſo wonderful underſtanding, and had written ſo much upon animals and plants, makes this confeſſion: *I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the ſun: becauſe tho' a man labor to ſeek it out, yet he ſhall not find it; yea further, tho' a wiſe man think to know it, yet ſhall he not be able to find it.* Eccleſ. viii. 17.

45. *We learn a fact; but do we know the cauſe?* Facts themſelves are not always certain, when in order to be diſcovered, they require time, patience, and ſagacity. The obſervers do not always agree in their obſervations.

50. *Into my holy none ſhall find acceſs.* Mixed ſubſtances to which we give the epithet of *monſtrous*, never produce. This is a fact which experience evinces, and of which philoſophy explains not the cauſe. Why has the mule never any poſterity? It is not the will of God. Mongrel ſubſtances exiſted not, when God bleſſed all his creatures, and commanded them to multiply.

67. *'Twas Intereſt promis'd firſt the learner's praiſe*, &c. Aſtronomy, Geometry, Arithmetic, daughters of Intereſt, had their birth amongſt the Egyptians: "as "their ſky was pure and cloudleſs, *ſays Mr. Boſſuet*, "they were the firſt to obſerve the ſtars; and in order "to know again their own lands, covered yearly by "the

" the inundations of the Nile, they were obliged to " have recourſe to menſuration."

85. *Old Saturn and his ſon ſhall boaſt their train.* The ſatellites of Jupiter were called the *Medicis* by Galileo, who lived under the *Medicis*; and M. Caſſini called Saturn's ſatellites *Bourbons*, becauſe he diſcovered them under *Lewis* XIV.

89. *Thrice happy babe beneath the Balance born!* One hiſtorian has pretended that this reaſon procured the ſurname of juſt to Lewis XIII. We have ſeen the Count of Boulainvilliers not look upon judicial aſtrology as a folly, tho' he had otherwiſe much wit and learning.

91. *A Horace ſhudders*, &c. *Seu Libra, ſeu me Scorpius aſpicit.* 'Whether the Balance beam, or Scor-'pion glare,' ſays Horace. And why ſo great a difference between two ſo contiguous conſtellations? The difference of the names. The Egyptian huſbandmen little knew the conſequence, that ſhould one day attend thoſe names, which they whimſically beſtowed without reaſon.

94. *Where many more than Cardan meditate*; Cardan a famous phyſician and aſtrologer, was one of thoſe men who impoſe upon others with a little learning and much impudence. He had the impiety to draw the horoſcope of Jeſus Chriſt. He predicted a long and glorious life to his eldeſt ſon, who nevertheleſs about the age of thirty loſt his head at Milan for poiſoning his wife. Gaſſendi relates this fact in his meteorology. It is ſaid that Cardan who had foretold the time of his death, let himſelf ſtarve for hunger, when the time predicted came.

96. *One patroniſes, and one pays Morin.* An aſtrologer who had acceſs to both thoſe miniſters, and a penſion from the latter.

99. *In dread of endleſs night*, &c. This folly of attempting to deliver the ſun by loud cries and clangors, is ſtill practiſed in Egypt. Virgil pretends that the ſun at Ceſar's death, 'fabled his golden head in iron hue,' *caput obſcurâ nitidum ferrugine texit*, and that 'the ſource of 'day announces the approach of dark events:' *Illa etiam cæcos inſtare tumultus ſæpe monet.* As our aſtronomers have at length fortified the people againſt eclipſes, the ſun has loſt much of his credit: but what influence does not the moon ſtill maintain!

101. *But hah! what threat'ning body*, &c. By Virgil's account, 'dire comets ne'er ſo oft had flam'd,' as at the death of Ceſar, *nec diri toties arſere cometæ.* Was he not a man important enough, to deſerve them? This ancient opinion begins to grow antiquated. In a company however, where ſuch a fear not long ago was ridiculed, a prince anſwered the ſneerers very ſeriouſly. *It is eaſy for you to laugh at comets: ye are not princes.*

108. *The coward owl*, &c. A fatal preſage for Dido, by the belief of Virgil;

Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo
Sæpe queri, & longas in fletum ducere voces.

And oft the lonely owl with boding ſong,
Pour'd from the roofs her lamentation long.

110. *Shall*

110. *Shall our ſalt tumble, and not we grow pale?* This ſuperſtition which paſſed from the Greeks to the Romans, has deſcended from the Romans to us. My note would be long, if to this omen I added all thoſe which men have been pleaſed to call fatal, or unlucky; as the tingling of the ears, ſneezing, the meeting of a bitch with young, of a red ſhe-wolf, and the reſt that Horace mentions in the ode *Impios parræ*, &c. The Spectator ſays he has ſeen a ruſty nail, a crooked pin, make warriors grow pale who had often faced the mouth of cannon, and that an owl in the night ſhall cauſe more alarm than a gang of thieves. In all ages and countries, thro' the weakneſs of our mind,

Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, ſagas,
Nocturnos lemures, &c. Hor.

Dreams, magic terrors, wonders, witches fright,
And dire hobgoblins that infeſt the night.

112. *Your rings, rods,* &c. Since God withdrew from ſinful man, he has ſpoken to him but rarely, and always to reclaim him, and make him better; yet we imagine he ought every moment to gratify our curioſity about the moſt frivolous queſtions. Hence all thoſe ridiculous methods we have invented to conſult him; the ancient oracles of which I ſpoke in the third Canto, the entrails of victims, the flight of birds, Dodona's oaks, *&c.* Hence the taliſmans, amulets, rings, and ſo forth; hence the credit ſo long maintained by all thoſe who pretend to foretel futurity, or to have the property of the wand: and hence all the myſteries of the cabaliſts. I have ſeen folks perſwaded of the exiſtence of an elementary people, and of aereal ſubſtances. If the firſt that advanced ſuch chimera's, advanced them ſe-

riouſly, he had a ſoverain contempt for mankind. This is the reflection Pliny makes upon another ſpecies of impoſtors. *Hæc ſeriò quemquam dixiſſe ſumma hominum contemptio eſt.*

115. *When all the num'rous errors Egypt bred*, &c. Egypt was the mother of ſciences and of errors. Both paſſed firſt into Greece. I know not why ſome of our learned men have pretended to find our new diſcoveries in phyſics among the Greeks. If we judge of the natural philoſophy of the Greeks by Plutarch's treatiſe on *the opinions of philoſophers*; what a heap of extravagancies! Anaximenes ſaid that the ſtars were ſtuck into the cryſtal of heaven, like ſo many ſtuds. Anaxagoras delivered that the heavens were of ſtone, and the ſun a ſtone of fire as large as the Peloponeſe. When ſuch opinions are advanced by philoſophers famed in a nation, the nation is not very learned. The ſages of Greece, intent upon morality, neglected the ſtudy of nature. Thales however ſuſpected that the ſun muſt be bigger than the Peloponeſe, and had a glimpſe of the roundneſs of the earth.

125. *Fir'd with his hero*, &c. Lucretius's philoſophy the ſame as that of Epicurus, is a rapſody of groſs errors. Several of thoſe errors have been honored with the verſes of Virgil, always a great poet in his Georgics, but often a bad naturaliſt.

128. *The art of conqueſt*, &c. Virgil gives up to other nations the glory of all the arts, even that of eloquence: *orabunt cauſas meliùs.* 'They better ſhall emplead.'

130. *The*

130. *The ſun*, &c. Some nations imagined that the earth was born upon elephants. The Greeks and Romans believed that by night the ſtars went and cooled themſelves in the ſea; that the ſky covered us as a vault, and that the ocean ſurrounded the earth. Coſmus the Egyptian delivers it as the common notion of his time, that the ſun went to bed behind a mountain. Hence the inequality of the days, according as he lay at the mountain's top or bottom.

146. *With Saracens commenc'd a baleful pow'r.* The empire of the Califs, of which Mahomet laid the foundation, became far more formidable by the union of the Turks and Saracens.

153. *Be all our palaces*, &c. When Mahomet made himſelf maſter of Conſtantinople, the palaces of the emperors, the ſtatues, the pictures, and the libraries ſtill more precious than ſo many rare monuments of antiquity, were buried by a people the bane of arts and ſciences.

161. *Darkening the maſter of the dark*, &c. Ariſtotle, whoſe long and aſtoniſhing ſucceſs, began in the love the Arabians conceived for his writings, which they rendered ſtill darker by their comments. Cicero ſays that 'Ariſtotle is unintelligible even to philoſophers.' *Ariſtoteles ipſis philoſophis ignotus.* Father Rapin who has made a pompous eulogy on him in his reflections upon philoſophy, owns however that he ſeems to have wrote with a deſign to be dark, and to give exerciſe to following ages: why would any thinking perſon loſe time in ſuch an exerciſe?

162. *Forms all thoſe famous doctors in his ſchool.* The ancient philoſophers had neglected nature: thoſe who followed them neglected her ſtill more. For ſeveral centuries nothing was to be heard but the idle ſubtilties of the ſchoolmen. The famous war between the Nominals and the Realiſts, where on one ſide was ſeen the ſubtile doctor, and on the other the invincible doctor, could find no end, but in an edict of *Lewis* XI.

170. *A Genoeſe*, &c. The ancients having always believed the earth a flat ſurface, could not ſuſpect another hemiſphere under ours. There is no probability that Plato by the Atlantic iland he mentions, and about which the learned diſpute, ſhould have meant America. Yet by ſome tradition, of which we cannot tell the origin, Seneca the tragic poet announces with the tone of a prophet, that one day a new world ſhall be diſcovered, but that that day is yet very diſtant.

Venient annis ſæcula ſeris
Quibus Oceanus vincula rerum
Laxet, & ingens pateat tellus.

The age ſhall come, tho' not at hand,
When Ocean looſing Nature's band
Shall make appear a mighty land.

Upon what ground could he predict this new world, of which nobody was dreaming, when Chriſtopher Columbus diſcovered America? Columbus himſelf deſcried it, at the time he thought he was going to China.

177. *A magnet*, &c. It was known onely that the loadſtone attracted iron; and till the twelfth century it

was unknown that being ſuſpended, it turns always the ſame ſide towards the ſame pole of the world. I have obſerved in the third canto, that the moſt uſeful arts have owed their birth to chance. Our nobleſt diſcoveries in natural philoſophy have had the ſame origin. Where the human mind finds matter of exaltation, it finds alſo matter of abaſement; becauſe every thing recals to it its weakneſs and its power.

180. *To us what bleſſing, tho' the Yncaes' bane!* This magnetic property now procured us the benefit of the compaſs, with which we undertook long voyages. The earth became known: nature and aſtronomy were ſtudied. But the Yncaes who had been ſix hundred years kings of Peru, when the Spaniards arrived there conducted by Piſaro, had reaſon enough to deteſt both compaſs and Spaniards.

190. *Two mediums*, &c. The teleſcope found in Zealand by the children of an optician, in the beginning of the ſeventeenth century, was the cauſe of the important diſcoveries which Galileo made in aſtronomy. Then it was he ſaw, ſo to ſay, an entire new heaven.

200. *Centre of Univerſe, calm king of day.* Since in poetry the earth itſelf is often called *the univerſe*; well may this name be given to the ſolar ſyſtem, which includes the earth with the other planets.

203. *Six years of durance*, &c. The unfortunate Galileo, for ſaying that the earth revolved, and the ſun ſtood ſtill, was impriſoned by the inquiſition, and obliged to retract. But time at length familiariſed a ſyſtem, which appeared at firſt a hereſy.

207. *What nun'rous habitants of regions new*, &c. The microſcope has made known to obſervers, and particularly to the illuſtrious M. Réaumur, an infinity of wonders, which our eyes could not diſcover without its aid.

217. *To ken ſo far, what optics muſt be found?* 'We 'know not what is at our feet, *ſaid Democritus, as* 'Tully tells us, and yet we would inveſtigate the hea- 'vens:' *quod eſt ante pedes nemo videt, & cœli ſcrutamur plagas.*

223. *And now the Stagyrite*, &c. Ariſtotle, whoſe reign was ſo long that we may ſay we have been witneſſes of its expiration.

226. *Abundant nature ſtill a void abhorr'd.* Ariſtotle had ſaid it, and Galileo himſelf believed it. The fountaineers of the great Duke perceiving that in large pipes which they had made, the water roſe not above 32 feet; Galileo was aſked the reaſon of the fact, which chance had made known: He anſwered gravely, that nature abhorred not a vacuum till the height of 32 feet. But when it came to be diſcovered that quick-ſilver roſe no farther than 27 inches; this proved a new perplexity. The experiments made by Mr. Paſcal and others have demonſtrated the weight of the air, and men at length have underſtood that it is better to ſtudy nature by experiment than in Ariſtotle.

229. *He lives obſcure*, &c. Retired ſometimes in Holland, ſometimes in Sweden, where he died, what contradictions did he undergo! and what enemies had Reaſon's champion to encounter amongſt us!

243. *Deſ-*

243. *Deſcartes firſt guides me*, &c. Himſelf has given his ſyſtem of the world but as a conjecture.

245. *There from a cubic maſs*, &c. That maſs of cubic parts which God, according to Deſcartes, made to turn upon their center, whence iſſued the globulous, and oblong matter, and of which the angles rubbing upon each other, formed the ſubtile matter, which driven to the center, compoſed the body of the ſun.

253. *Each act on each*, &c. According to the Newtonian ſyſtem, the bodies moving in the void attract each other in direct proportion of their maſſes, and inverſe of the ſquare of their diſtances; and by the ſame laws of attraction are impelled towards the common center.

257. *But 'mongſt th' unequal volumes who ſhall tow'r*, &c. Let none accuſe me of wanting reſpect either for Newton or Deſcartes. If I did not admire them, I would not prove by them the impotence of the human mind, when it would paſs the bounds ſet to its knowlege.

266. *That body*, &c. The progreſſive ſwiftneſs of a falling body is known to us: we calculate the velocities it ought to have in every inſtant of its fall. But why does it fall? Newton contents himſelf with ſaying that gravity or weight is a firſt quality which God has impreſſed upon matter. We know the facts, we reaſon about the cauſes.

269. *After a meal*, &c. Is it trituration, or fermentation, or both together? The difference of ſentiments evinces the uncertainty of the cauſe.

275. *Or in another no leſs precious ſtrife*, &c. The part of phyſics, in which we ought to have made the greateſt progreſs, is phyſic. For how many centuries had phyſicians but a rude knowledge of anatomy, botany, *&c?* How many ages were they ignorant of the circulation of the blood? It was a ſtanding doctrine till the 16th century, that when the pain is in the right ſide, you muſt bleed on the left. Briſſot dared to advance the contrary, and kindled a very hot war in Spain. Recourſe was had to the magiſtrate. An Act paſſed to prohibit bleeding contrary to the old opinions. From this Act roſe an Appeal to the emperor Charles V. He was about to decide in favor of the ancient method, when the duke of Savoy died, tho' blooded in a pleuriſy, according to that practice. This death diſconcerted Charles V. who did not dare to pronounce: and the cauſe remained undecided. What war did antimony raiſe among us! Decrees were obtained ſometimes to prohibit, and ſometimes to permit it. The Quinquina, or Jeſuits bark, which ſo quickly cures the ague, had a nnmber of enemies among our phyſicians. They oppoſed a remedy ſo contrary to all the ails *which make the craft's domain*, ſays La Fontaine in his poem on the Quinquina. Moliere's animoſity againſt the phyſicians proceeded from the fondneſs which many then retained for the ancient errors. Every one knows the ſubject of the burleſk decree of Boileau. The pleaſantry of the poet ſaved the honor of more than one philoſopher.

303. *Fell peſt'lence ravages*, &c. The origin of natural evil has ever been matter of difficulty. Maximus Tyrius a Platoniſt, in his treatiſe, *Whence procede evils, ſince God is the author of good*, ſays that plagues, conflagrations, &c. are not in the intention of God, but a conſequence neceſſary to the ſupport of his work: becauſe the deſtruction of the parts operates the preſervation of the whole. *Deus totum reſpicit, cujus cauſâ neceſſe eſt corrumpi partes.* This principle, grown now ſo common, limits ſtrangely the divine power. Sometimes our reaſoners have a faint idea of it; ſometimes they affect to have ſo high a one, that they dare not determine whether God cannot render matter thinking. In what a labyrinth man muſt ſtray, when he loſes the thread of religion!

314. *Thou long haſt known; but canſt the problem ſolve*, &c. The expectation of a general burning is very ancient, and common to almoſt all nations, by the accounts of travellers. 'It will happen,' ſaid Seneca, *cùm Deo viſum ordiri meliora, vetera finire*, 'when it 'ſhall pleaſe God to put an end to old things, and to 'begin better.' Since nothing is eternal, ſays Lucretius,

——————*Fateare neceſſe eſt*
Exitium quoque terrarum cœlique futurum.

——————to own we can't avoid
That earth and heaven itſelf ſhall be deſtroy'd.

The earth, according to his conjecture, having in proceſs of time loſt all its moiſture, ſhall become combuſtible by the action of the ſun upon it.

——;——*Cùm ſol & vapor omnis*
Omnibus epotis humoribus, exuperarint.

When Sol exhales each vapor to the ſky,
And drinks to Earth aduſt her humors dry.

Other philoſophers conjecture, that the planets finding a continual reſiſtance to their pervading the ether, their centrifugal force grows weaker by degrees, and this ſenſible weakening, multiplied by the ſucceſſion of ages, will be the cauſe why the earth and the other planets ſhall at laſt ruſh upon the ſun. We need not aſk the philoſophers if their conjectures be probable or not: let us aſk them onely why they make them. Who told them that the world ſhould come to an end, and that its end ſhould be by fire? Natural philoſophy never announced this event. I hint at the end of the ſixth canto, what may have been the origin of this old tradition.

326. *Whoſe temple's univerſe, whoſe prieſt is man.* Montagne pretends to laugh at this privilege which man arrogates to himſelf as the onely being in the univerſe, who can know its beauty, and render thanks to its architect. "Who has ſealed him this privilege? *ſays he*, let him ſhow his letters of orders for this great and glorious office." He is the onely thinking being: ſuch is his privilege, and ſuch are his letters of orders.

334. *Sin was their bias, and their end was death.* &c. "Man, a ſlave to concupiſcence, *ſays M. Boſſuet*, tranſmits it to his poſterity: when all is born in concupiſcence, all is born in diſorder; all is born hateful to God. What crime has the child committed? He is the child of Adam; that is his crime."

337. *It*

337. *Is't ours,* &c. We are not to judge of the Divine juſtice by ours. Ours is a juſtice between man and man: the Divine is a juſtice between infinite and finite, Creator and creature. Yet does not our juſtice itſelf puniſh ſometimes children for the crimes of their fathers, and have we not laws which degrade from nobility not onely the criminal but all his poſterity? Thoſe laws do not appear to us unjuſt.

339. *Earth was no more a paradiſe of joys.* Milton paints to us immediately after Adam's diſobedience, ſin and death iſſuing from hell, where till then they had been confined, and building a bridge of communication with our world.

Then both from out hell-gates into the waſte
Wide anarchy of Chaos, damp and dark,
Flew divers, and with pow'r (their pow'r was great)
Hov'ring upon the waters; what they met
Soiled or ſlimy, as in raging ſea
Toſs'd up and down, together crouded drove,
From each ſide ſhoaling tow'rds the mouth of hell:
As when two polar winds blowing adverſe
Upon the Cronian ſea, together drive
Mountains of ice, that ſtop th' imagin'd way
Beyond Petſora eaſtward, to the rich
Cathaian coaſt. The aggregated ſoil
Death with his mace petrific, cold and dry,
As with a trident ſmote, and fix'd as firm
As Delos floating once; the reſt his look
Bound with Gorgonian rigor not to move,
And with Aſphaltic ſlime: broad as the gate,
Deep to the roots of hell the gather'd beach
They faſten'd, and the mole immenſe wrought on

Over

Over the foaming deep high arch'd, a bridge
Of length prodigious joining to the wall
Immovable of this now fenceleſs world,
Forfeit to death; from hence a paſſage broad,
Smooth, eaſy, inoffenſive, down to hell.
So, if great things to ſmall may be compar'd,
Xerxes, the liberty of Greece to yoke,
From Suſa, his Memnonian palace high,
Came to the ſea, and over Helleſpont
Bridging his way, Europe with Aſia join'd,
And ſcourg'd with many a ſtroke th' indignant waves.
Now had they brought the work by wondrous art
Pontifical, a ridge of pendent rock,
Over the vex'd abyſs, following the track
Of Satan, to the ſelf-ſame place where he
Firſt lighted from his wing, and landed ſafe
From out of Chaos to the outſide bare
Of this round world: with pins of adamant
And chains they made all faſt, too faſt they made
And durable; and now in little ſpace
The confines met of empyrean heaven
And of this world, and on the left hand hell
With long reach interpos'd——

While the Creator calling forth by name
His mighty angels, gave them ſev'ral charge,
As ſorted beſt with preſent things. The ſun
Had firſt his precept ſo to move, ſo ſhine,
As might affect the earth with cold and heat
Scarce tolerable, and from the north to call
Decrepit winter, from the ſouth to bring
Solſtitial ſummer's heat. To the blanc moon
Her office they preſcrib'd, to th' other five
Their planetary motions and aſpects

In

In ſextile, ſquare, and trine, and oppoſite,
Of noxious efficacy ; and when to join
In ſynod unbenign : and taught the fix'd
Their influence malignant when to ſhower,
Which of them riſing with the ſun, or falling,
Should prove tempeſtuous. To the winds they ſet
Their corners, when with bluſter to confound
Sea, air, and ſhore ; the thunder when to roll
With terror thro' the dark aereal hall.
Some ſay he bid his angels turn 'aſcance
The poles of earth twice ten degrees and more
From the ſun's axle ; they with labor puſh'd
Oblique the centric globe : ſome ſay the ſun
Was bid to turn from th' equinoctial road
Like diſtant breadth to Taurus with the ſeven
Atlantic ſiſters, and the Spartan twins
Up to the tropic crab ; thence down amain
By Leo and the Virgin, and the ſcales,
As deep as Capricorn, to bring in change
Of ſeaſons to each clime ; elſe had the ſpring
Perpetual ſmil'd on earth with vernant flowers,
Equal in days and nights, except to thoſe
Beyond the polar circles : to them day
Had unbenighted ſhone, while the low ſun
To recompence his diſtance, in their ſight
Had rounded ſtill th' horizon, and not known
Of eaſt or weſt, which had forbid the ſnow
From cold Eſtotiland, and ſouth as far
Beneath Magellan. At that taſted fruit
The ſun, as from Thyeſtean banquet turn'd
His courſe intended ; elſe how had the world
Inhabited, tho' ſinleſs, more than now
Avoided pinching cold and ſcorching heat ?
Theſe changes in the heavens, tho' ſlow, produc'd

Like

Like change on ſea and land, ſidereal blaſt,
Vapor, and miſt, and exhalation hot
Corrupt and peſtilent: now from the north
Of Norumbega, and the Samoeid ſhore
Burſting their braſen dungeon, arm'd with ice
And ſnow and hail and ſtormy guſt and flaw,
Boreas and Cæcias, and Argiſtes loud,
And Thraſcias, rend the woods and ſeas upturn;
With adverſe blaſt upturns them from the ſouth
Notus, and Afer black with thundrous clouds
From Sierra-liona; thwart of theſe as fierce
Forth ruſh the levant and the ponent winds,
Eurus and Zephyr with their lat'ral noiſe,
Sirocco and Libecchio. Thus began
Outrage from lifeleſs things; but Diſcord firſt,
Daughter of Sin, among th' irrational,
Death introduc'd thro' fierce antipathy:
Beaſt now with beaſt 'gan war, and fowl with fowl;
And fiſh with fiſh: to graſe the herb all leaving
Devour'd each other; nor ſtood ſo much in aw
Of man, but fled him, or with count'nance grim
Glar'd on him paſſing.

PARADISE LOST, Book X.

We ſhall find learned men maintain that this diſorder which Milton ſo beautifully deſcribes, happened actually after the deluge. As I follow neither poetical fictions nor probable conjectures, I advance nothing but certainty, and what I advance ſuffices, I think, to explain the origin of natural evil. God curſed the earth, and foretold that it ſhould produce to us briars and thorns. It was no more a paradiſe of joys: this was its firſt puniſhment.

346. *Kind*

346. *Kind heaven a ſecond time their manſion ſmote.* This was the earth's ſecond puniſhment: the deluge. It cannot be denied that this general overthrow blaſted its beauty, altered the purity of the air, and was the cauſe why the life of man has been ſince ſo much ſhortened. But did God diſplace the axis of the earth? Was there a perpetual equinox before the flood? And that eternal ſpring ſung by the poets, was it true, as Burnet has pretended? We read with pleaſure what M. Pluche has wrote in his Diſplay of Nature, and reviſal of the Hiſtory of the Heavens, to ſupport this conjecture; but I confine myſelf to ſaying, that by its ſands, its chinks, its noxious exhalations, the earth preſents to us in a thouſand places marks of the great blow with which it was ſmitten, that nature ſuffers and groans, as ſays St. Paul, Rom. viii. 19. 20. 22. *For the earneſt expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifeſtation of the ſons of God. For the creature was made ſubject to vanity, not willingly;——The whole creation groaneth and travelleth in pain together until now.*

The original of natural, and that of moral evil, is therefore one and the ſame; that is, the ſin of the firſt man.

349. *Saw on her blaſted boſom*, &c. I ſpoke juſt now of our laws which degrade the poſterity of a criminal. We have alſo ſome which degrade his domain, by enacting that the lofty foreſt be lopt to a certain height, and the moats of the caſtle filled up, that even the foreſt and the caſtle may be puniſhed for the crime of their lord. Why then not allow that God, who had given man the empire of the earth, ſhould have blaſted the

beauty of that empire, when man by his diſobedience rendered himſelf unworthy to poſſeſs it.

362. *Replace the day*, &c. The heavenly Jeruſalem *hath no need of the ſun, neither of the moon to ſhine in it: for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the lamb is the light thereof.* Rev. xxi. 23.

377. *If my Religion but to error run.* This thought of La Bruyere is famous: "If my Religion were falſe, "it were the beſt laid ſnare that can be imagined. It "was impoſſible not to go wrong," &c. This thought is imitated in the fine ſaying of Richard de St. Victor: *Domine, ſi error eſt quem credimus, à te decepti ſumus: quoniam iis ſignis prædita eſt Religio, quæ non niſi à te eſſe potuerunt.* 'Lord, if it is error that we believe, by 'thee are we deceived; ſince with thoſe ſigns is Religion 'endued, which could not be but from thee."

395. *Yet how ſo far from natal place and hour*, &c. If any would object that converſions have been made by violence in America, none can deny that all thoſe of the eaſt have been made by ways of perſwaſion, and have been very numerous among the Chineſe, ſo extolled for their ingenuity. It is not neceſſary that the Chriſtian be every where the reigning religion, but that there be Chriſtians over the whole earth.

405. *From Ganges' banks*, &c. This thought is alſo in La Bruyere. "Were it aſſured that the ſecret mo-"tive of the Siameſe ambaſſy, was to excite the moſt "Chriſtian king to renounce Chriſtianity, and to allow "the entrance of his kingdom to the Talapoins, who "ſhould have entered our houſes, to inculcate their re-

"ligion

" ligion upon our wives, our children, ourſelves; with " what laughter, and what ſtrange contempt ſhould we " hear ſo extravagant tidings? We make however to " all thoſe people propoſals which muſt appear to them " very mad and ridiculous, and yet they ſupport our " religious and our prieſts,——What ſhould work this " in them and in us, were it not the force of truth?"

422. *With which each people, every land ſhall ring.* It behoves not that the whole earth have been converted; it ſuffices that it has heard: that which was foretold, is accompliſhed.

427. *But with the torch of Faith,* &c. " Reaſon, " *ſays Locke,* is a natural revelation, and revelation is " natural reaſon augmented by a new fund of diſco- " veries proceding immediately from God." Theſe two revelations teach us what we ought to know for the preſent benefit of our bodies, and the future advantage of our ſouls. When we would carry our curioſity farther, and exerciſe over the works of God a right of examination, Nature herſelf informs us that we have it not. I have ſhown in the ſecond canto and in this, the errors of thoſe who would attempt to know her. They are but ſyſtems which deſtroy one another by turns. The ancient philoſophers have pretended to explain nature by the means of water, of air, of fire, or of ſome other generative principle, then by the atoms, the four elements, the dry and the moiſt. Our moderns have had recourſe ſometimes to the three elements ſprung from the ſquaring of cubes, ſometimes to attraction, ſometimes to monads active and paſſive, and capable of thought. What contrariety in the human mind, which without proofs believes thoſe unin-

telligible things, and reſiſts a religion proved by a cloud of witneſſes. The moſt incredulous to the word of God, are often the moſt credulous to the fooliſh opinions of men.

448. *Without thee, Word eternal, ſtill unknown.— None knoweth the Father, but by the Son.* Since Sin, God having withdrawn himſelf from us, we cannot return to him without being recalled. Can a ſubject diſgraced and exiled reattend his maſter, if ſome one come not from the offended to declare the offender's remiſſion and recal. The deiſt who believes neither diſgrace nor recal, would eſtabliſh his religion upon reaſon alone, without revelation. The difference of the religions that ſubſiſt upon the earth, perſwades him that they are all falſe, becauſe, ſays he, if God had eſtabliſhed one, it would be the onely one. All thoſe religions which appear to him ſo different, are reducible to three, which all three concur to depoſe againſt him, that there has been a revelation. Except a few idolaters that ſtill remain, as if to recal to our view the ancient extravagances of mankind without revelation; what will the earth afford us, if we ſhall run over it? What men we ſhall find, will be Jews, Chriſtians, or Mahometans. The Chriſtian recalled to the Father by the Son, reveres the prophets who announce that Son to the Jews; he regards his religion as the accompliſhment of the Jewiſh, and both make but one. The Mahometan reverences the prophets of the Jews, and the Meſſiah of the Chriſtians; to which Meſſiah he makes an imaginary prophet ſuccede. His religion, which is neither Jewiſh nor Chriſtian, but a ſtrange medley of both, allows that either has preceded it; and fancies itſelf, like

like them, founded upon revelation. Thus then are the three religions agree'd to confound the deiſt: thus are all men combined to tell him, that every religion muſt be founded on revelation, and that a revelation there has been. So the deiſt who knows neither diſgrace, nor recal, who thinks he alone follows Reaſon and honors God by her, is ſtill farther from God and from Reaſon, than the Jew, or the Mahometan himſelf.

NOTES

NOTES:

UPON

CANTO VI.

Verſe 12. *WHY would he too that man himſelf ſhould hate?* " Jeſus Chriſt, *ſays* " *M. Boſſuet*, propoſeth to us the " love of God, even to the hating of ourſelves. He " propoſeth to us the moderation of ſenſual deſires, even " to the cutting off of our own members— to renounce " all pleaſure; to live in the body, as if out of the " body; to forſake all, to live upon little, almoſt no- " thing, and to look for that little from Providence." *Univ. Hiſt.*

22. *From duty for ſo poor a price to ſwerve.* " There " are ſome people, *ſays M. Paſcal*, who damn them- " ſelves ſo fooliſhly." He whom I make to ſpeak here, is perſwaded that the imaginary pleaſures which our vanity alone realiſes, merit not our attachment, and that the pleaſures of the ſenſes deſerve it not: but as nature draws us to both, he is frightened at a law which oppoſes nature. Thus tho' he be neither covetous nor ambi-

ambitious, nor epicurean, nor pyrrhonian, he has difficulty to be a real chriſtian.

26. *And ſhall a drop of honey doom to hell.* Alluding to the words of Jonathan, *I did but taſte a little honey, —and lo, I muſt dy.* 1 Sam. xiv. 43.

33. *The judge renown'd of eleganter joy.* St. Evremont, famous for his parts and his pleaſures, was called the Petronius of his age. In his diſcourſe upon pleaſure, he boaſts of not knowing himſelf. " I will not " about any thing have too long or too ſerious a confa- " bulation with myſelf :— ſince prudence has had ſo " little ſhare in the actions of my life, I ſhould be ſorry " if it preſumed to regulate its end."

39. *Yon rimer's gaieties,* &c. The *Abbé de Chaulieu,* in the poems he has printed under his name, harps every moment upon his age, his gout, and his contempt of death.

66. *And tyrant-like to cruſh the frame he gave.* The heathen philoſophers had argued many different ways concerning the ſupreme good. Jeſus Chriſt begins his ſermon upon the mount, with deciding that great queſtion. *Bleſſed are they that mourn, bleſſed are they that ſuffer,* &c. And the firſt whom he aſſures, according to Mr. Boſſuet's reflection, of a place in paradiſe, is a companion of his croſs, dying upon it by his ſide.

69. *Thus ſpeaks a man his conflict of deſires.* " Men, " *ſays Abadie,* are incredulous, becauſe they chooſe to " be ſo ; and they chooſe to be ſo, becauſe it is the in- " tereſt of their paſſions."

78. *To*

78. *To Reaſon's voice*, &c. *Ratio eſt vera lex.* Reaſon is the true law, ſay the Spinoſiſts in the *Pantheiſticon* printed in England, a book, of which the morality, having no other end than the tranquillity of the ſoul, is yet very ſevere, ſince it every where enjoins reſiſtance to the paſſions. Bayle, in his treatiſe upon the comet, aſks if a ſociety of atheiſts would make themſelves any principles of morals and probity. This book is a proof of it; but he who ſhould ſincerely practiſe its doctrine, would ſoon tire of hoping no other reward than the ſoul's tranquillity. An honeſt man is eaſily a Chriſtian.

85. *Theſe ne'er in Plato can we hope to find*; &c. In the ſcience of nature, the ancient philoſophers uttered nothing but error. In the ſcience of morals, they have delivered the greateſt truths, becauſe the natural law engraves thoſe truths upon our hearts. How ſevere a caſuiſt is Cicero in his Offices! But thoſe truths are to be found even in the poets, from whom we may extract an abridgement of morality, and the great principles of our duty towards God, towards men, and towards ourſelves.

97. Jove circles all, &c. *Jovis omnia plena.* 'All's 'full of Jove.' *Virg.*

Hinc omne principium, huc refer exitum. Hor.

100. Leſs dear I'm to myſelf than to my God.
Carior eſt illis homo quam ſibi. Juv.

103. He ſpurns the offering of a guilty hand, &c.
Compoſitum jus, faſque animi, ſanctoſque receſſus
Mentis, &c. Perſ.

105.

105. *See heaven-born Juſtice*, &c. This image of divine Juſtice is in Heſiod, and that of Clemency in Statius, *Theb.* 12.

114. *Be vengeance Heaven's, to whom its rights belong.* 'Revenge, *ſays Juvenal*, is of a weak and paltry 'ſoul the joy.'

——— *quippe minuti*
Semper & infirmi eſt animi exiguique voluptas
Ultio.

117. His faults to palliate, &c.

At pater ut nati, ſic nos debemus amici, &c.

122. I am a man, each man's a friend to me.

Homo ſum, humani nil à me alienum puto.

123. *The poor and ſtranger claim my aid and care.* 'The poor and ſtrangers, *ſays Homer in the Odyſſey*, 'come to us from the gods.

126. *For ſolid wealth is onely wealth beſtow'd.* A famous epigram of Martial:

Solas, quas dederis, ſemper habebis opes.

128. *The bounteous man is onely leſs than God.* 'Nothing, *ſays Cicero*, exalts men nigher to the Gods than 'doing good. Thoſe who,

— *ſui memores alios fecere merendo*,

are placed by Virgil in the Elyſian fields.

132. And 'gainſt my ſpouſe, &c.

Hoc fonte derivata clades
In patriam populumque fluxit. Hor.

135. *Who feeds a ſecret flame*, &c. It is Ovid who ſo deems of guilty thought:

Quæ quia non licuit, non facit, illa facit.

and elſewhere,

Omnibus excluſis intus adulter erit.

137. *Shame is the rareſt boon the heavens beſtow:* A ſentiment of Euripides.

139. The richeſt flow'r that decks the richeſt vale, &c.

Ut flos in ſeptis ſecretus naſcitur hortis;
Sic virgo, dum intacta manet.

141. *Love, tender Love*, &c. Catullus ſays to Hymen, *Nil poteſt ſine te Venus, fama quod bona comprobet, commodi capere.*

144. The world preſents me nought I can admire.

Nil admirari propè res eſt una, &c. Hor.

[145. Free from ambition, &c.

Quod ſis eſſe velis, nihilque malis.

147. *Nor riches rivet*, &c. This is the wiſe man of whom Virgil ſpeaks,

——————Nec ille
Aut doluit miſerans inopem, aut invidet habenti.

149. I am no haughty menial of the great,

Dulcis inexpertis cultura potentis amici:
Expertus metuet, &c. Hor.

152. What ſtrange inanity in all ye do!
O curas hominum, ô quantum eſt in rebus inane!

154. I haſte to live, and haſte to live for me.
Sed neuter ſibi vivit heu! bonoſque ſoles effugere atque abire ſentit, qui nobis pereunt, & imputantur. Mart.

160. I ſhun their glances, and my life conceal.
Bene qui latuit, bene vixit:
a maxim of Ovid.

163. This day perhaps of mine the laſt has ſhone.
Omnem crede diem tibi diluxiſſe ſupremum:
Grata ſuperveniet, quam non ſperaveris hora.
Mart.

164. Too known to all we dy, yet ſelf-unknown.
Illi mors gravis incubat
Qui notus nimis omnibus
Ignotus moritur ſibi. Sen. Trag.

168. *The coward needs will dy, the brave can live.*
So ſaid Martial:
Rebus in anguſtis facile eſt contemnere vitam:
Fortius ille facit, qui miſer eſſe poteſt.

Plato and Cicero, in ſaying that it is not lawful for a ſentinel to quit his poſt without the orders of him who placed him there, have condemned ſuicide by a better reaſon. It is not aſtoniſhing the heathens ſhould have condemned that which nothing juſtify.

184. *Mild, chaſte, beneficent,* &c. Cicero paints in his Offices that ſecret complacency of a virtuous ſoul. *Si conſiderare volumus, quæ ſit in natura excellentia & dignitas; intelligemus quàm ſit turpe diffluere luxuriâ, & delicatè ac molliter vivere, quàmque honeſtum, parcè, continenter, ſeverè, ſobriè.* 'If we will conſider the excellence and dignity of human nature; we ſhall underſtand how ſhameful it is to diſſolve in luxury, and to live in delicacy and ſoftneſs; and how honorable to live with parſimony, continence, ſtrictneſs, and ſobriety.'

195. *The ſages' life their leſſons ſtill bely'd.* We may ſay of the wiſeſt of the heathens, not one excepted, as ſaid St. Auguſtine: *Agebat quod arguebat, quod culpabat adorabat.* 'He practiſed what he preached againſt; and what he arrained he worſhipped.'

The women were common by the laws of Lycurgus. Plato prohibited drunkenneſs, except at the feaſts of Bacchus. Ariſtotle forbid unſeemly images, but allowed thoſe of the gods. Solon erected at Athens the temple of immodeſt love. "All Greece, *ſays M. Boſſuet*, was full of temples conſecrated to this God, and conjugal love had not one."

198. *In Seneca too oft we Ovid ſee.* Seneca, as falſe a philoſopher as a wit, renders his doctrine deſpicable by the pompous tone in which he delivers it. I could cite paſſages of the ancients not very favorable to his morals, and touch upon his immenſe riches: but it ſuffices to characteriſe the ſtoic ſo ſevere in his diſcourſe, to ſay that he was a ſervile flatterer of the monſter whoſe pre-

preceptor he had been, ſo far even as to be capable of juſtifying him in the murder of his mother. *Tacit. ann.* 15. I have mentioned in the ſecond canto the ſuperſtitious ſaying of a dying Socrates. What ſhall we ſay of a dying Seneca who takes of the water of his bath, and ſprinkles with it the by-ſtanders, ſaying: *Jovi liberatori.* 'To Jove the deliverer?'

207. *Games I deteſt whence Cato muſt withdraw.* The games of Flora were repreſented with the moſt ſcandalous licentiouſneſs. Cato who aſſiſted at them, perceiving that thro' reſpect for his preſence, the people durſt not demand of the performers their uſual licences, retired to leave them at full freedom; which made Martial ſay:

Noſſes jocoſæ dulce cùm ſacrum Floræ,
Feſtoſque luſus, & licentiam vulgi;
Cur in theatrum, Cato ſevere, veniſti?
An ideo tantùm veneras, ut exires?

Since well thou knew'ſt the wanton Flora's way,
The feſtive games and licence of the mob;
Why, rigid Cato, cam'ſt thou to the ſcene?
Didſt enter onely to depart again?

Martial's point is juſt, but goes not far enough. Cato is condemnable for coming to games, where decency forbids to aſſiſt. Cato is no leſs condemnable for withdrawing thence, when he ſees that his preſence aws the people. His unworthy complaiſance is an evidence of his vanity.

234. *The nobleſt virtues wond'ring earth ador'd.* 'Nothing is hard for Love, ſays *St. Auguſtine*,' *Ubi amatur, non laboratur: aut ſi laboratur, labor certè amatur.* 'Where love is, no labor is: or if labor is, the 'labor

' labor is beloved.' We learn from the heathens themſelves, how admirable were the manners of the firſt Chriſtians. Pliny's famous letter to Trajan bears them an unſuſpected teſtimony. Lucian, who ſpares nobody, has rallied the Chriſtians; but his very ralleries do them honor. He acquaints us in the death of Peregrine, with what zeal the firſt Chriſtians relieved each other. " For, " *ſays he*, their lawgiver made them believe that they " are all brethren; ſo that they hold all things com- " mon; they deſpiſe every thing, and even death it- " ſelf, upon the hopes of immortality."

241. *Who ever guiltleſs take the guilty's fate.* The " miracle of miracles, *ſays M. Boſſuet*, is, that with " faith, the moſt eminent virtues and moſt painful " practices overſpread the earth. Even the innocent " puniſhed in themſelves with an incredible rigor that " prodigious proneneſs which we have to ſin. The de- " ſerts were peopled, and ſo many were the ſolitaries, " that more perfect ſolitaries were conſtrained to ſeek " more profound ſolitudes."

251. *Great Theodoſius weeps, when Ambroſe awes.* St. Ambroſe enjoined him public penance, for the murder of Theſſalonica. Theodoſius ſubmitted to it, and not allowed to enter the ſanctuary, lay proſtrate before the gate of the church, ſtripped of his imperial ornaments, earneſtly begging mercy, and watering the pavement with his tears.

297. *Thoſe heroes croſs'd*, &c. The cruſades were ſtiled holy wars, becauſe their object was the deliverance of the holy places. For this zeal it is that Godfrey of Bouillon is the hero of Taſſo, who ſings, he ſays, pious arms.

Canto

Canto l'armi pietoſe, el Capitano
Che'l gran Sepolcro liberò di Chriſto.

I ſing the pious arms, the captain bold,
That free'd the ſacred ſepulcre of old.

301. *But ever blaſted be the odious names*, &c. Julian the apoſtate ſaid of the furies of the Arians againſt the Catholics, that the Chriſtians were more cruel to one another than tigers. What would he have ſaid of the furies that have diſtracted and exaſperated the later ages of the church?

314. *Whoſe was the choice? 'twas you deſerted us.* "There is always, *ſays a celebrated divine*, this unhappy fact againſt the heretics. They have ſeparated "from the great body of the church. But to us what "conſolation to be able from our high-prieſt to remount without interruption to St. Peter, [and the "other apoſtles,] appointed by Jeſus Chriſt. Whence "reſuming the pontifs under the law, we aſcend to "Aaron and Moſes, thence to the patriarchs and the "origin of the world! what ſeries! what tradition! "what wonderful concatenation!

326. *Againſt all hope, ſtill hope we their return.* "They will return, *ſays the ſame author*, and that never to go aſtray any more."

340. *Bears to the tomb his noble dout away.* The duke of Buckingham ſays in his epitaph at Weſtminſter:

Dubius, ſed non improbus vixi.
Incertus morior, non perturbatus.

Doutful,

Doutful, but not wicked I lived :
Uncertain, yet untroubled I dy.

When a man has lived in dout, and dies in uncertainty, can he boaſt of dying without diſquiet? If ſome perſons of wit have had the misfortune to err ſo egregiouſly, let us not believe that their example has been generaliy followed. In à note upon the fourth canto, I have named the great men who had adorned the firſt ages of the church. A numerous liſt might be made of thoſe who in theſe latter ages have edified by a ſincere faith. I ſpeak not onely of thoſe choice ſpirits, and famous ſcholars, who have been attached to the church by their life and labors. How many geniuſes illuſtrious in letters, and even in the profound ſciences, metaphyſics, medicine, aſtronomy, geometry, (tho' Bayle in the article of Paſcal, finds the thing very rare) have been filled with an humble piety! The collection of the eulogies of the illuſtrious members of the *académie des ſciences* has acquainted us with many. The greateſt philoſophers of England, a Boyle, a Locke, and a Newton, have ſhown by their writings their ſubmiſſion to revelation. Nor can I better finiſh this note, than with the name of Paſcal, whoſe life, " more proper, *ſays* " *Bayle*, to diſarm the impious than a hundred volumes " of ſermons," confirms what has been ſaid of Religion, that ſhe makes the ſimpleſt ſpirits believe great things, and the ſublimeſt to practiſe ſmall ones.

344. *Sapp'd by degrees Faith's tott'ring tow'rs muſt fall.* An Engliſh geometrician perſwaded of this truth, has attempted to apply to it the geometrical calculations in his book entitled : *Philoſophiæ Chriſtianæ principia mathematica.* Upon this very falſe principle, that a fact diminiſhes

diminiſhes in evidence as it grows in age; he has calculated when the faith of Jeſus Chriſt, which muſt always continue to decreaſe, ſhould be quite extinct, and thought he found by this calculation, that the laſt judgement ſhould happen in about 1500 years. This ſaying of Jeſus Chriſt, *it is not for you to know the times and ſeaſons*, overturns all ſuch geometrical calculations.

346. *The day impendent on the univerſe.* I have ſaid in the fifth canto, that the expectation of the general burning of the world is almoſt as ancient as the world itſelf. Heathen philoſophers and poets announce it: Propertius, Lucretius, Ovid.

Una dies dabit exitio, multoſque per annos
Suſtentata ruet moles, & machina mundi.

One day ſhall wreck the long-ſupported world,
And totally diſſolve the gen'ral frame. *Prop.*

Eſſe quoque in fatis reminiſcitur affore tempus,
Quo mare, quo tellus, correptaque regia cæli
Ardeat, & mundi moles operoſa laboret:

He recollects a time announc'd by fate
When ſea, when earth, when heaven's own tortur'd dome
Shall burn, and lab'ring univerſe ſhall fail. *Ovid.*

The expectation of ſuch an event, which nature's philoſophy could not announce, muſt neceſſarily take its riſe in an ancient tradition, of which there appears to me a teſtimony in Joſephus. He relates, b. 1. that the ſons of Adam having been inſtructed that the earth was to undergo two deluges, one of water, the other of fire; in order to preſerve this tradition, engraved it upon two columns, hoping that if one periſhed in the firſt deluge, the other might poſſibly ſurvive. If Adam's children

had this knowlege, they have diffuſed it, and ſo it has tranſmitted its own perpetuity.

366. *Mankind once more ariſing from the ground*, &c. So far is Reaſon from proving the impoſſibility of the body's reſurrection, that it aſſures the poſſibility of it. Nature ſeems itſelf to offer us an image of it, in the glorious reſurrection of the meaneſt inſects. I mentioned in the firſt canto, a prodigy which phyſics cannot explain. He who can change a caterpillar into a butterfly; he, who has formed the human body, ſo wonderful a frame; he who could unite it with the ſoul, could render that union eternal; and if he is pleaſed to break it for a time, can afterwards re-eſtabliſh it. Reaſon tells us that no ſubſtance is annihilated. God can doutleſs ſeparate thoſe which he has united, and reunite thoſe which he has ſeparated. Reaſon evinces that he can, and Religion aſſures us that he will. The ſociety between ſoul and body was at firſt to have been eternal. Death proved the puniſhment of ſin. God commanded that the ſociety ſhould be broken for a time, but he foretold withal that he would one day reſtore it. We have ſeen in the courſe of this work, the accompliſhment of moſt of the things predicted. Be we therefore perſwaded, that all the reſt of what has been foretold, ſhall be equally accompliſhed.

379. *When the poor Bonze extols his fruitleſs pain*, &c. No one is ignorant of the almoſt inconceivable auſterities which the Bonzes and Bramins practiſe to draw the veneration and alms of the people. They are martyrs to error, intereſt, and vanity.

384. *Blaſphemes his prophet, paradiſe, and all.* The Chriſtian Religion, which enjoins a life of penitence upon earth, promiſes a paradiſe wholely ſpiritual: the Mahometan on the contrary permits a ſenſual life in this world, and promiſes a paradiſe quite carnal in the next. The picture of this paradiſe is ſo groſs, that by Briot's account in his *Ottoman Empire*, Turks of ſenſe and ſagacity dare not believe it true; but the multitude makes no dout of it. Many are ſimple enough to preſerve a tuft of hair upon their head, that at the laſt day Mahomet may lift them up more eaſily. He is to ſave them all. "Indeed, *ſays he in the koran*, great ſinners "ſhall at firſt be puniſhed; but by my interceſſion, they "ſhall be finally received into paradiſe, it not being "poſſible that true believers ſhould abide for ever in "eternal flames with the faithleſs."

394. *Sacred to Thee, to that great day remain.* A Religion which begins and ends with the world, and recals the whole hiſtory of the world to its own, its dominion having been eſtabliſhed by the revolutions of the other empires; a Religion which recals all nations, even the Mahometans by their own Religion, to that firſt revelation, given to the firſt people ever ſubſiſting ever to atteſt it; a Religion in fine, which by ſo many teſtimonies drawn from Reaſon, from hiſtory and from nature, diſcloſes the origin of the world's diſorders and of our miſeries, and which, tho' announcing a God concealed, forms a body of ſo glorious light, bears evidently impreſſed the character of divinity. God ſhows himſelf to ſinful man, onely under a vail: but the two great works, where ſhines the unity of a conſtantly purſued deſign, make him particularly known and confeſſed.

Theſe two works are Nature and Religion. The deiſts who dwell upon the firſt, are forced to own that man ought to worſhip a ſupreme Being, the creator of the world; but as they know not what they are to hope or fear, they worſhip him without knowing him, or rather they worſhip nothing; and one may ſay of them more juſtly than an ancient poet ſaid of the Jews:

Nil præter nubes & cæli numen adorant.

They worſhip but the clouds and heavenly power.

Thoſe who know a Creator in his work of power, which is nature, and a Reſtorer in his work of righteouſneſs and love, which is Religion, are they onely who know and worſhip the ſupreme Being in the manner in which he ought to be known and worſhipped, who is ſpirit and truth.

IT ſeems but juſtice to the late M. Rouſſeau, as well as to this poem, to ſubjoin the return he made when conſulted upon it by M. Hardion, licenſer of the French preſs, previouſly to the following approbation:

I have read, by order of my Lord Chancellor, *The Poem of Religion, by M. Racine*; and it appears to me, that whether one conſider the ſolidity of the thoughts and reaſoning, or give attention to the nobleneſs of the images and the magnificence of the ſtile, the performance anſwers perfectly the grandeur and dignity of the ſubject.

Verſailles, Jan. 3, 1742. HARDION.

Whatever recommendation the poem of Religion may derive from the importance and grandeur of its ſubject, it claims no leſs admiration from the manner in which it is treated; whether we conſider the aſſemblage, the choice, and the force of the arguments; or regard the economy and judicious diſtribution of thoſe arguments, which giving light to each other by the art with which the author has ranged them, compoſe a body of evidence, and a whole of conviction which it is impoſſible for the blindeſt and moſt obſtinate incredulity to reſiſt: and this muſt render the work as immortal as the Religion which it defends.

But however ſolid it be, that very ſolidity might have hurt it in the taſte of the majority of readers, whom the uſeful cannot pleaſe, unaccompanied

panied with the entertaining, and who would rather ſacrifice utility to their pleaſure, than their pleaſure to utility. For this the author has amply provided in the rich variety of painting he has poured thro' the whole of his work, and in the magnificence of the ſtile in which he has done the drapery: ſo that if ever poetry could be called the language of the Gods, this merits peculiarly to be termed the language of God, who ſeems himſelf to ſpeak by the organ of him whom he has been pleaſed to charge with his cauſe. This is a teſtimony I ow to my own conſcience, and to the impreſſion which the peruſal of the poem has made upon my heart and my mind. Its conduct I have traced with great attention.

In order to eſtabliſh the proofs of Religion, it is neceſſary to begin with eſtabliſhing thoſe of the exiſtence of God. This the author has done in the firſt Canto, where all that phyſics can furniſh to poetry, and metaphyſics to reaſon, is to be found deſcribed and developed in the nobleſt and diſtincteſt manner. Theſe proofs bring in naturally the diſtinction of the two ſubſtances, their union in life, and ſeparation at death; whence follows the demonſtration of the ſoul's immortality. The various and warring opinions of philoſophers upon this important ſubject, conduct to the neceſſity of a revelation. The third Canto purſues the propoſition advanced at the end of the former, ſhowing by the hiſtory of the world, and of the Jews in particular, that in their books alone Revelation is to be found; whence reſults by indiſputable conſequences the authenticity and truth of a Religion announced by prophets, confirmed by miracles, and avouched by Mahomet himſelf, its greateſt enemy.

The

The fourth Canto is perfectly linked with the third, by the admirable exhibition of the riſe of the Chriſtian Religion, of the miracles of its author, of the accompliſhment of the prophecies, of the ſo rapid propagation of the goſpel, and of its eſtabliſhment amidſt perſecutions and puniſhments. There we ſee nations ſubmitted, human reaſon confounded, the folly of the croſs triumphant over the wiſdom of the world, and laſtly Rome, the center of paganiſm, puniſhed as Jeruſalem had been, but riſing out of her own aſhes to beam as bright in chriſtianity. After theſe evidences drawn from matters of fact, the author fortifies the head and heart of man; the one againſt the obſcurity of Religion's myſteries, the other againſt the ſeverity of her morals. He ſhows in the fifth Canto how far goes the ignorance of man, and the difficulties which the Deiſt cannot anſwer; whereas the Chriſtian finds the anſwer in revelation. With regard to the moral part, what ſtruck me moſt is the parallel equally learned, ſolid, and ingenious of the morality of the very poets, and of poets too the moſt corrupt of paganiſm, with that of the Chriſtians.

This thought, that Religion exacts onely what right Reaſon enjoins, and that the Goſpel, if one may ſo ſpeak, renders the way no narrower than mere philoſophy and the duties preſcribed to the man of honor, is admirably expreſſed, and it was fit it ſhould; but it was alſo fit to ſhow the advantage which the Chriſtian has over every other morality. This advantage conſiſts in the precept of charity, the moſt pleaſing of all precepts, all others addreſſing themſelves onely to reaſon, but this directly to the heart, which is what God peculiarly

culiarly requires; and as this virtue is the crown of all Chriſtian virtues, the author could no better crown his work, than by making us taſte the value and neceſſity of it.—This he has executed in ſo moving and exalted a manner, that it ſeems as if God himſelf had choſen human language to ſpeak to the human heart.

Bruſſels, Aug. 3, 1737. ROUSSEAU.

The candid will pleaſe to read,

Canto I. Verſe			
	71.	at end	at an end.
	105.	it	her.
	114.	can'ſt	canſt.
	166.	teleſcopial	teleſcopic.
	438.	he	ſhe.
III.	293.	people,	people.
	295.	their	the.
	409.	and beats	that beat.
IV.	159.	he ſaw	ye ſaw.
	437.	arms	th' arms.
Notes.	Page	Line	
	130.	16. innocence	an innocence.
	139.	20. ſhows	ſhowed.

8 AP 67